In the Name of Allah,
the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

قال الله تعالى:

﴿إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيُذۡهِبَ عَنكُمُ ٱلرِّجۡسَ أَهۡلَ ٱلۡبَيۡتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمۡ تَطۡهِيرًا﴾

"Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification."
(*Sūrat al-Aḥzāb* 33:33).

Prophetic traditions mentioned in both in Sunnī and Shī'ah authoritative reference books of *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr* (exegesis of the Qur'an) have confirmed that this holy verse was revealed to exclusively refer to the People of the Cloak [*ahl al-kisā'*], viz. Muḥammad, 'Alī, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn (*'a*) as the *Ahl al-Bayt* (People of the Household).

For instance, refer to the following references:

Sunnī

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH), al-*Musnad*, 1:231; 4:107; 6:292, 304; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (d. 261 AH), 7:130; Al-Tirmidhī (d. 279 AH), *Sunan*, 5:361 et al.; Al-Dūlābī (d. 310 AH), al-*Dhuriyyah al-Ṭāhirah al-Nabawiyyah*, p. 108; Al-Nasā'ī (d. 303 AH), al-*Sunan al-Kubrā'*, 5:108; 113; Al-Ḥakīm al-Nayshābūrī (d. 405 AH), al-*Mustadrak 'ala' ṣ-Ṣahīḥāyn*, 2:416, 3:133, 146-147; Al-Zarkashī (d. 794 AH), al-*Burhān*, p. 197; Ibn Hājar al-Asqalānī (d. 852 AH), *Fatḥ al-Barī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 7:104.

Shī'ah

Al-Kulaynī (d. 328 AH), *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, 1:287; Ibn Babawayh (d. 329 AH), al-*Imāmah wa' t-Tabṣīrah*, p. 47, *ḥadīth* 29; Al-Maghribī (d. 363 AH), *Da'ā'im al-Islām*, pp. 35, 37; Al-Ṣādūq (d. 381 AH), al-*Khiṣāl*, pp. 403, 550; Al-Ṭūsī (d. 460 AH), al-*Amalī*, *ḥadīth* 438, 482, 783.

For more details, refer to the exegesis of the holy verse recorded in the following books of *tafsīr*: al-Jassās (d. 370 AH), *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*; Al-Wāḥidī (d. 468 AH), *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*; Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 AH), *Zād al-Masīr*; Al-Qurṭubī (d. 671 AH), al-*Jāmi' Li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Tha'labī (d. 825 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Ṭabarī (d. 875 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH), al-*Durr al-Manthūr*; Al-Shawkānī (d. 1250 AH), *Fatḥ al-Qadīr*; Al-'Ayyāshī (d. 320 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Qummī (d. 329 AH), *Tafsīr*; Furt al-Kūfī (d. 352 AH), *Tafsīr* at the margin of the exegesis of *Sūrat al-Nisā'* verse 59; Al-Ṭabarsī (d. 560 AH), *Majma' al-Bayān*, as well as many other sources.

THE EXPECTED MAHDI (‘A)

قال رسول الله ﷺ:

"إني تاركٌ فيكُمُ الثَقلين: كتاب الله، وعترتي أهلَ بيتي، ما إن تمسكتُم بهما لن تضلوا أبداً وأَنَّهُما لَن يَفترِقا حتّى يردا عَليَّ الحوضَ"

The Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*) said:
"Verily, I am leaving among you two precious things [*thaqalayn*]: The Book of Allah and my progeny [*'itratī*], the members of my Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*]. If you hold fast to them, you shall never go astray. These two will never separate from each other until they meet me at the Pond [*ḥawḍ*] (of *Kawthar*)."

Some references:

- Al-Ḥākim an-Nayshābūrī, *Al-Mustadrak 'alā'ṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (Beirut), vol. 3, pp. 109-110, 148, 533
- Muslim, *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, (English translation), book 31, *ḥadīth*s 5920-3
- At-Tirmidhī, *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, pp. 621-2, *ḥadīth*s 3786, 3788; vol. 2, p. 219
- An-Nasā'ī, *Khaṣā'iṣ 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, *ḥadīth* 79
- Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, al-*Musnad*, vol. 3, pp. 14, 17, 26; vol. 3, pp. 26, 59; vol. 4, p. 371; vol. 5, pp. 181-182, 189-190
- Ibn al-'Athīr, *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, p. 277
- Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa'n-Nihāyah*, vol. 5, p. 209
- Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, vol. 6, p. 199
  Naṣīr ad-Dīn al-Albanī, *Silsilāt al-Aḥādīth aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* (Kuwait: Ad-Dār aṣ-Ṣalāfiyyah), vol. 4, pp. 355-358

THE EXPECTED MAHDI (‘A)

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PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

The invaluable legacy of the Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*] of the Prophet (may peace be upon them all), as preserved by their followers, is a comprehensive school of thought that embraces all branches of Islamic knowledge. This school has produced many brilliant scholars who have drawn inspiration from this rich and pure resource. It has given many scholars to the Muslim *ummah* who, following in the footsteps of Imāms of the Prophet's Household (*'a*), have done their best to clear up the doubts raised by various creeds and currents within and without Muslim society and to answer their questions. Throughout the past centuries, they have given well-reasoned answers and clarifications concerning these questions and doubts.

To meet the responsibilities assigned to it, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly (ABWA) has embarked on a defence of the sanctity of the Islamic message and its verities, often obscured by the partisans of various sects and creeds as well as by currents hostile to Islam. The Assembly follows in the footsteps of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) and the disciples of their school of thought in its readiness to confront these challenges and tries to be on the frontline in consonance with the demands of every age.

The arguments contained in the works of the scholars belonging to the School of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) are of unique significance. That is because they are based on genuine scholarship and appeal to reason, and avoid prejudice and bias. These arguments address scholars and thinkers in a manner that appeals to healthy minds and wholesome human nature.

To assist the seekers of truth, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly has endeavored to present a new phase of these arguments contained in the studies and translations of the works of contemporary Shī'ah writers and those who have embraced this sublime school of thought through divine blessing.

The Assembly is also engaged in edition and publication of the valuable works of leading Shī'ah scholars of earlier ages to assist the

seekers of the truth in discovering the truths which the School of the Prophet’s Household (‘*a*) has offered to the entire world.

The Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly looks forward to benefit from the opinions of the readers and their suggestions and constructive criticism in this area.

We also invite scholars, translators and other institutions to assist us in propagating the genuine Islamic teachings as preached by the Prophet Muḥammad (*ṣ*).

We beseech God, the Most High, to accept our humble efforts and to enable us to enhance them under the auspices of Imām al-Mahdī, His vicegerent on the earth (may Allah expedite his advent).

We express our gratitude to Ayatullah Javadi Amuli, the author of the present book, and Dr. Mahmoud Farrokhpey, its translator. We also thank our colleagues who have participated in producing this work, especially the staff of the Translation Office. ✍

Cultural Affairs Department
Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) World Assembly

INTRODUCTION

The significance of the past, present, and future in the process of globalization

The present race of man is continuous, an unbreakable continuum from the beginning to the end. Lack of awareness of the past and future is the basis of the lack of confidence in the present way of life.

How could a person, ignorant of his past and future, ever evaluate himself, and through pure determination achieve his practical goals, plan his future prosperity and achieve it? One can consider the past as a bygone event, and under the pretext of future foresight, forget the beginning of his creation. But such an approach is fruitless. This is because man's creation is not a recent phenomenon. It has its base in continuous truth, and all sorts of internal peace and war, ethical love and hate, mental greed and contentment, personal kindness or disappointment, point to the very beginning of man's creation. The event of the creation of Adam and Eve, Satan's arrogance, man's appointment as the Divine representative, the acquisition of God's Name, man's commission to construct the earth and to set rules to guide the descendents, Satan's aggressiveness, determination to continue his animosity towards man: all have had their role in shaping man's society. The idea of the universal savior, the leveling of the lofty mountains, the smoothing of the earth's ground, the healing of the *ummah* and the appearance of the perfect and pure man, all have had their share in the making of the present generation. Knowledge of man's past will help him to plan his future. A society which lives only in the present and is ignorant of its past, loses a lot. An *ummah* that recognizes its past will benefit greatly from it and gain precious outcomes in the future. The point is that, besides the resurrection, a complete research of the end of the world is worth considering, especially nowadays, when globalization is a serious reality.

Man's future based on order and justice

Is the world heading for chaos or in the direction of order? Chaos and disorder are not predictable; since something which is not yet framed cannot be the topic for discussion. Is order based on justice or

tyranny, force, dictatorship, exploitation, colonization and stupidifying? None of them have been accepted by those recognizing the structure of creation. This is because the world started with rightfulness and will end up in rightfulness. Order, based on right and justice accepted by experts, has numerous implications and applications, some of which are manifested by tyranny dressed as justice or a wrong action passed on as right. This is due to the fact that such words look appropriate. The atheism-base Marxism led communities towards misleading beliefs and invited people towards assumed and false justice. However, it failed because the future is the result of the past. One who assumes the beginning of creation as matter obviously concludes its terminal state. This is because such a person does not believe in Him; the First and the Last.

The Divine, justice-based Savior will grant order to the future world

The monotheists believe that the structure of the world and the universe and the bond between these two is an ordered, correct structure, and falsehood has no place in it. There are many verses in the Holy Qur’an saying that the order of existence is based on right, and that falsehood looks like the foam on the surface of water which does not last for long. One who considers right as the very foundation of the world will protect this righteousness. And one who considers it as a reward for his right actions will obey this righteous order. Almighty God, who protects such a universe, will enliven the world through His justice-based savior: the last of God’s men.

The notion of Mahdawiyyah (a belief in the appearance of the expected Mahdi) does not apply to those who consider that the future of the world will be based on right and justice resulting from a purely democratic system. This is because Mahdi’s type of government will not be of the type of democracy as understood by those people.

A righteous and just future will be the consequence of Mahdi’s (‘a) government

Only those who believe in righteousness and see it in a Divinely commissioned individualistic governorship, believe entirely in Mahdi (‘a).

The role of wisdom and narration in the affirmation of personal Mahdawiyyah

It would be impossible to prove Mahdawiyyah through reasoning alone. This is because, its character, conditions and plans are explained by wisdom, theology and the Islamic leadership. This book has tried to depict the expected Mahdi (‘a) through wisdom and related narrations.

Javadi Amuli

Qum

SECTION ONE
RECOGNIZING THE IMAM (‘A)

CHAPTER ONE
GENERAL IMAMATE

In Shiism, the issue of Imamate is a theological one, not a jurisprudential one. This is because an issue, which deals with God's acts, is a theological one. On the other hand, an issue, which deals with people's duties, is a jurisprudential one. In Shiism, one of the principles of belief is the appointment of the Imam as an act of God. However, the acceptance of the Imam's appointment by God is a jurisprudential act.

The point is:

1- Whatever is concerned with Almighty God and His acts is a religious principle. Theology deals with Divine Acts

2- Those issues which refer to man and his duties are among definite laws. Jurisprudence and ethics deal with man's responsibilities.

Imamate is one of the principles of theology. However, others consider it among jurisprudent issues and definite rules. Such people do not believe in the Imam's Infallibility and consider him just like an ordinary leader appointed by the people and not by God. For this reason, they place Imamate in the realm of jurisprudence and not in theology. In the firm belief of the Twelver Shi'as, social management is one of the Imam's minor obligations, and despite those who wrongly assume that by Imamate is meant directorship, the Imam is a precious personality whose very being satisfies the community's needs; and his Divine personality leads the angels in Heaven. From the theological point of view, God appoints the Imam. This is because the Imam does not show signs of weakness or negligence either in his duties or in his personal behavior. He does not even think of getting involved in sinful acts. This is called infallibility, which is among the secret signs of the Perfect Man. It is also a prerequisite for Prophet-hood and Imamate. Such a man is capable of understanding the galaxies' secrets through God's instructions and of comprehending those beneficial acts which are necessary for man. He is also able,

through God’s permission, to grasp the hidden truth of both people and things.

This can only be done by God who selects and appoints Imams. In the process of examining Abraham (‘a), God considered Imamate as one of His Rights:

﴿قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا﴾

“Surely I will make you an Imam of men.”[1]

﴿قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

“My Covenant does not include the unjust, said He.”[2]

Injustice would include any sort of wrongdoing, and Almighty God considers injustice as an obstruction in the achievement of Imamate or Prophet hood. Thus, infallibility is one of the basic preconditions for the achievement of such a Divine position. The appointment of the Infallible as an Imam is a Divine Act and a religious principle; consequently, it is a theological issue.

In the opinion of those who do not consider infallibility as a pre-condition for Imamate,[3] Divine Imamate is meaningless. They mistakenly confuse man’s caliphate with Divine Imamate. They consider caliphate as the material management of the community, and interpret Imam and Imamate as caliph and caliphate, assuming him as an ordinary social leader, being elected by community votes. Such people assume that it is possible to elect an Imam at Saqifa of Bani Sa‘ida, and that God’s appointment of an Imam at Ghadir Khumis not necessary.

The jurisprudential aspect of Imamate

Despite the theological nature of the issue of Imamate, it is often referred to as one of the Islamic religious ancillaries (Furu‘) in some

1- *Qur’an 2:124.*
2- *Qur’an 2:124.*
3- **Kashf al-Murad**, p.390.

narrations.[1] Both Imamate and Wilayah have got two aspects: theological and jurisprudential. Due to its jurisprudential nature, it is parallel to prayers, fasting, pilgrimage, participation in Holy wars, paying alms and the like. These are all definite laws.

Those aspects of Imamate, which deal with the appointment of the Imam, are among Almighty God's Acts and considered as principles: theology is responsible for this aspect. But since the acceptance of the Infallible Imam and obedience to his leadership is among people's duties, it is among jurisprudential issues. Thus, the acceptance of the Infallible Imam, like prayers, is among minor and jurisprudential issues.

At this point, the Shiite concept differs greatly from others. This is because according to the school of appointment, governing is firmly based on merit (infallibility) and those who deserve to get the governorship are appointed to this position by God's orders. But based on the other school, it is possible for the qualified ones to be put aside. This is shown in the liberal democratic societies in the west.

The followers of this second school do not possess the necessary insight. And there are few people who have insight. Concerning those who can see but, in fact, lack insight, Almighty God tells His beloved Messengers, "There are many who look at you, but do not see you." These people only see their out-side appearance and understand them only superficially:

﴿وَتَرَىٰهُمْ يَنظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ﴾

"And you see them looking towards you, yet they do not see."[2]

In the issues of Imamate and Wilayah, there are those who lack insight. Those who, under the roof of Saqifah Ibn Sa'idah, solved the issue of the Prophet's (s) substitute, by selecting one who was not related to the Prophet (s) in any way; they were superficial human beings, and not people of insight capable of recognizing the holy

1- **Al-Kafi,** Vol.2, p.18.
2- *Qur'an 7:198.*

Prophet (s). They acted in the dark, knowing nothing of the position of the Prophet’s (s) substitute.

The appointment of the Imam according to Imam Rida (‘a)

Among the people of Marv, the followers of the Infallible (‘a) were of the view that an Imam should be appointed by God and should assume Wilayah. However, others were of the opinion that the Imam should be **elected through common votes. Such an Imam would then be the people’s representative.**

Upon arriving at Marv and knowing of this issue, Imam Rida (‘a) said: “They were ignorant of the position of Imamate, let alone the Imam himself. In the same way that God is recognizable through His Divinity, an Imam is known through his Imamate.” Then Imam Rida (s) counted the features of an Imam: “The Imam is a unique personality of his own time.”[1]

An Imam is not appointed just to manage people’s ordinary affairs; rather, his job is to explain Divine knowledge, to clarify the jurisprudential commands, to engage in judgment, to carry out punishments, to defend the bases of Islam and to solve people’s scientific and pragmatic issues.

On the other hand, in the same way that people need the Imam, the angels too, need him. This is because, the Imam is the instructor of God’s epithets and angels learn through him and solve their problems and hardships through him. Addressing Adam (‘a), God Almighty said: “You are my representative and the Imam of this period; therefore, inform the angels of God’s epithets:

﴿قَالَ يَـٰٓـَٔادَمُ أَنۢبِئۡهُم بِأَسۡمَآئِهِمۡ﴾

“O Adam! Inform them of their names.”[2]

The Imam is the perfect infallible being, manifesting the Great Name, the greatest of names. In the same way that nobody can observe the

1- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.201.
2- *Qur’an 2: 33.*

farthest star in the galaxy, man's wisdom can never comprehend any Imam.

Never has man's wisdom reached that realm of Imamate to be able to appoint one as Imam.

The Mahdistic argument against the appointment of Imam by people

Sa'd Ibn Abdullah Qummi asked Imam Mahdi ('a): "Why can't people elect their own Imam?" The Imam ('a) asked him: "By Imam, do you mean an honest and constructive leader or a dishonest and sinful one?" Sa'd replied that he meant a constructive one. Then Imam Mahdi ('a) said: "No body knows what is going on in the mind of the other person. Then might people select one who is dishonest?" Sa'd answered, "Yes." Then Imam Mahdi ('a) said, "I reasoned with you so that you might know."[1]

A reasonable life depends on recognizing the Imam

Both Shiite and non-Shiites have reported Imam Mahdi ('a) saying:

"One, who dies without recognizing the Imam of his time, dies like a Kafir of the Age of Ignorance."[2]

A pagan death represents an ignorant life; this is because death reflects the essence of life. Those who live good lives die elegantly and those who live poorly die poorly, since death reflects the very essence of life. It is as if life becomes a sherbet, which a man tastes on his death bed. If this liquid is sweet, it is because his life was sweet and if it is bitter, it is because it shows his life cycle.

﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ ٱلْمَوْتِ﴾

"Every soul shall taste death."[3]

1- **Kamal al-Din,** vol.2, p.136.
2- **Kamal al-Din,** vol.2, p.81; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.32, p.331; **Sharh Nahjul-Balagha,** Ibn Abi al Hadid, vol.13, p.243.
3- *Qur'an 3:185.*

Death means change. Man heads for the permanent home; he tastes change and digests it. After death, he dwells in Eternity.

After death, man is free from any optional change or of any movement. Prior to death man can change; but after he tastes death, he can do nothing voluntarily; he cannot repent; he cannot ask for another chance to prove himself good.

The other thing to mention is that we taste death, not the other way round, because God did not say death tastes man; He said man will taste death. The truth is that death does not destroy man; it is man who destroys death.

In the culture of the Qur’an, death is like juice in the bowl, which is tasted by man. Anybody who lives in this world is like a tree that, upon growth, brings forth fruit. Then the fruit of this growing tree are taken and converted into juice and this juice is given to man on his death bed. Anyone who, during his life-time, is a fruitful tree, his juice will be sweet: death for such a man is sweet. But, anyone whose life is bitter, and who annoys people all the time, his juice is nothing but bitter. Such a juice is not palatable: death would be hard on such a person. Those who live good lives die good and those who live nasty lives shall die a terrible death. If it is a bed of thorns: you have planted it yourself; and if it is a pack of silk, you have woven it yourself.

How can a person rest who builds himself a bed of thorns?[1]

A bed of thorns is the worst bed that a man can rest on; it would hurt.

One, who does not recognize Imam Mahdi (‘a) nor develop a bond with him, does not carry out the orders of the Prophet (s), let alone the recommendations of Almighty God; his death is as death in the period of Ignorance, indicative of an ignorant life. Since he carries out a life in the fashion of the period of Ignorance, his life ends in the same way.

One who has not recognized his Imam shall not wait for him, and this is a sign of the ignorant. One may pretend that he is a protector of the Holy Qur’an and may stand inside the Mosque of the Great Prophet

1- **Firdousi’s Shahnamah**, No.20.
Shams Tabrizi, p.709, The year 1898 AH.

of Islam (‘a) to pray, but lead a life of ignorance. Lady Fatimah (‘a) said at the Fadak sermon [1] by referring to the following Qur’anic verse,

﴿أَفَحُكْمَ ٱلْجَـٰهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ ۚ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ﴾

“Is it then, the judgment of (the times of) ignorance that they deserve? And who is better than Allah to judge for a people who are sure?”[2]

Therefore, one who does not recognize the Imam of his own time and does not wait for him, leads a life of Ignorance and as a result, his death will be a death of Ignorance. One who has recognized his Imam and knows that the Imam is aware of his affairs, and accepts that the Imam is a manifestation of the following Qur’anic verse:

﴿أَفَمَنْ هُوَ قَآئِمٌ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ نَفْسٍۭ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ﴾

“He is the one who watches every soul as to what it earns.”[3-4]

He will definitely await his Imam. This means he will carry out the Imam’s orders, which are, in fact, the orders of *shari‘ah*, and get near his Imam. Thus, both his life and death would be reasonable.

The criterion of a life of Ignorance

A life of Ignorance is a general concept, which includes the superficial stages leading to the miserable life that pre-Islamic man enjoyed, referred to as the life of Ignorance. This time coincided with the Arab’s darkest period of life, showing no signs of human culture or civilization. A description of the Age of Ignorance by Imam Ali (‘a) is as follows:

1- See **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.29, pp.220-235; **Dala’il al-Aemmah**, pp.31-38; the description of **Nahjul-Balagha,** Ibn Abi al-Hadid, vol.16, pp. 250-251.
2- *Qur’an 5: 50.*
3- *Qur’an 13: 33.*
4- **Al-Tawhid,** Saduq, p.189.

"Allah sent Mohammad (s) as a warner against vice for all the worlds and a trustee of His revelation, while you people of Arabia were following the worst religion and you resided among rough stones and venomous serpents. You drank dirty water and ate filthy food. You shed each other's blood and cared not for relationships; idols are fixed within you and sins are clinging to you.'[1]

Burying baby girls alive, referred to in different Qur'anic verses:

﴿وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِٱلْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُۥ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ يَتَوَارَىٰ مِنَ ٱلْقَوْمِ مِن سُوٓءِ مَا بُشِّرَ بِهِۦٓ ۚ أَيُمْسِكُهُۥ عَلَىٰ هُونٍ أَمْ يَدُسُّهُۥ فِى ٱلتُّرَابِ ۗ أَلَا سَآءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ﴾

"And when a daughter is announced to one of them his face becomes black and he is full of wrath. He hides himself from the people."[2]

Describes this Dark Age. Although the prophet hood of the Great Prophet of Islam (s) put an end to this miserable period of human life, degrees of ignorance persisted.

In the Qur'anic culture, the criterion of an ignorant or reasonable life is not the growth in industry or enjoyment of a luxurious life. The Holy Qur'an mentions nations who, despite enjoying an improved industry and a happy life, got involved in a life of misery and ignorance to the point where they were doomed for Divine punishment, and finally met their destruction. The tribes of 'Aad and Thamud and the fellows of Hijr were among those people. In spite of their skill in planning cities, the tribe of 'Aad was living an ignorant life.[3] In the same way the Holy Qur'an reckons the life of the Iranian

1- **Nahjul-Balagha**, Sermon 26.
2- *Qur'an 16:58-59.*
3- The tribe of Ad had great architectural skill of a degree that the Holy Qur'an says of them:

﴿إِرَمَ ذَاتِ ٱلْعِمَادِ ﴿٧﴾ ٱلَّتِى لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِى ٱلْبِلَٰدِ﴾

and Roman Emperors as a life of ignorance despite their material progress. The criterion of an ignorant life and death is the lack of recognition of one's God and His delegates.

The death of ignorance[1] is also mentioned in al-Kafi[2] (in the Hadith on Will); but there is a difference between these two narrations. In the Hadith on will, an ignorant death embodies the negation of perfectness; but in the sacred narration, which deals with the recognition of one's Imam, it embodies the negation of truth. This is like "La Salat" in the sacred narration by the Prophet (s): 'If a person lives next to mosque, he should perform his prayer there.' [3] The prophetic narrations [4] in which the completeness of prayers is referred to with a difference, is that the first refers to the negation of perfectness, while the second one deals with the negation of truth.

Let us explain; the word "la sakat" in the second narration is taken to mean that if a person deliberately does not recite Surah Hamd in his prayer, he has not offered the prayer, in the same way that if a person does not perform ablution before his prayer, his worship is not

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"*The people of Aram, possessors of lofty buildings like of which were not created in the other cities (fajr: verses 7-8).* The tribe of Thamud who had the skill of leveling the mountains and building lofty and secure residents:

﴿وَثَمُودَ ٱلَّذِينَ جَابُواْ ٱلصَّخۡرَ بِٱلۡوَادِ﴾

"*and with the Thamud, who hewed out the rocks in the valley*" *(fajr, verse 9)*; and the fellows of Hijr

﴿وَكَانُواْ يَنۡحِتُونَ مِنَ ٱلۡجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا ءَامِنِينَ﴾

"*Who hewed houses in the mountains for security*" *(Hijr 82).* Despite all these manifestations of improvement in their material life, the Holy Qur'an reckons their life as a life of misery;

﴿فَأَخَذۡنَٰهُم بِمَا كَانُواْ يَكۡسِبُونَ﴾

"… so we seized them for what they had earned." (Araf, verse 96).

1- **Al-Kafi,** vol.2, p.19 and p.21.

2- **Kamal al-Din,** vol.2, p.81; **Manaqib Ali ibn Abi Talib,** vol.3, p.58; **Wasa'il al-Shi'ah,** vol.19, p.259.

3- **Tahthib al-Ahkam**, vol.1, p.92.

4- See **Nahj al-Haq wa Kashf al-Sidq**, p.424; **'Awali al-La'ali**, vol.1, p.196; **Mustadrak al-Wasa'il**, vol.4, p.158.

acceptable: no prayer without purification.[1] But, the expression "la salat" in the narration, emphasizes the presence of the person in the congregation, if he lives next to the mosque; his prayer is not acceptable as a perfect one if he does not do so. The death of ignorance as mentioned in the sacred *hadith* on Will, in accordance with both narrated and rational reasoning, embodies the negation of perfectness. This means anyone who dies without having prepared his will (prior to his death) lacks a perfect life, despite the fact that he might possess very little of such a perfect life. But, the negation of a reasonable life, in the narration on the recognition of Imam of the Time, embodies the negation of a fact, and not of perfection. This is taken to mean that such a person has had a life of ignorance from the beginning and never enjoyed a reasonable life; for this reason, his death would be a death of ignorance.

The life and death of ignorance in Divine revelation

God's Word, or Divine Revelation, is a vital factor in human societies:

﴿يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱسْتَجِيبُواْ لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ﴾

"O you who believe! Answer the call of Allah and His Apostle when he calls you to that which gives you life."[2]

Revelation and prophet hood give impetus to human societies, i.e. the close relationship between the Holy Qur'an and the Sacred Household of the Prophet of Islam (s). The order of one means the order of the other one; thus, obeying the family of the Prophet (s), too, is life-giving.

An ignorant death stems from an ignorant life, which, in the culture of Revelation, is equal to death. The Holy Qur'an does not consider those who think ignorantly as living beings:

﴿لِّيُنذِرَ مَن كَانَ حَيًّا وَيَحِقَّ ٱلْقَوْلُ عَلَى ٱلْكَـٰفِرِينَ﴾

1- **Man La Yahduruh al-Faqih,** vol.1, p.33; **Tahthib al-Ahkam**, vol.1, p.50.
2- *Qur'an 8: 24.*

"That it may warn him who would have life, and (that) the word may prove true against the unbelievers."[1]

In this Holy verse, Almighty Allah compares "the living" with the infidel and not the believer and the infidel. It is as though God had said man is either living (alive) or an infidel.

On many occasions, the Holy Qur'an mentions these four issues very clearly. For instance, this verse states that a man is either alive or an infidel, despite the fact that the usual way is to classify a man is as alive or dead. Then, it says that a living man is either a Muslim or an infidel. The Holy Qur'an has taken the view that a man is either a believer or dead.

In other words, in the culture of the Revelation, an infidel (kafir) is dead, and true life belongs exclusively to those who believe. This contrast looks strange on the surface, but deep inside it is true and genuine.

Those who pass this world ignorantly have had an ignorant life and those who live ignorantly would not benefit from a true life. Those who do not recognize the promised Existent and his light of Wilayah are living an ignorant life, lacking a genuine life, only possessing an animal life. Similarly one, who knowingly and deliberately, does not surrender to the truth of the Qur'an and rejects it, and the one who does not recognize the word of Allah is dead. One who has not established a close relationship with the promised Existent, not recognized the Wilayah of His Imam, is dead indeed, and has never benefited from the holy Qur'an.

Human life, according to the Qur'an

Life is one of the characteristics by which man is defined, and we can comprehend the truth of human life only if we define man in a proper way. Most researchers have defined man as a "talking animal." But this is differently defined in the Holy Qur'an: others have defined man as a living-thing who talks, or as a being who perceives the general phenomenon. However, the Holy Qur'an defines man as a "living-being who believes in monotheism and not a talking animal.

1- *Qur'an 36:70.*

In the eye of Revelation, man is the creature whose life equals “thinking monotheism.” Monotheism means man, in his beliefs, ethics, jurisprudence, rights and other issues, can think and act monotheistically. The holy Qur’an affects only living men, and the unbelievers, who are indeed dead, are subject to God’s rage. Since unbelievers are not monotheistic, they cannot benefit from the Qur’an, thus, lacking human life altogether.

The signs of mental life

Mental life has got several features. One of them is to show hatred towards sin and an inclination to avoid it. In the interpretation of the Qur’an and that of the Infallibles (‘a), sins mean the carcass. Man, through his experiences and observations, arrives at mental concepts. The stronger are one’s mental concepts, the sooner is the abhorrence towards sins. It is man’s skill to see the fire easily and not through the smoke of the fire. One, with less mental capability, cannot observe sin as a whole, though the hurting smell of the carcass of sins annoys his mental nose. One who possesses the minimum amount of mental life can smell the odor of sins committed.

The comprehension of prophet hood depends on the recognition of Imamate and the recognition of Prophet hood rests on the comprehension of monotheism. One, who wants to recognize his Imam (i.e. Imam Mahdi (‘a), should recognize his Allah, and the Prophet (s), who is God’s delegate. If we do not recognize God, we will not recognize His envoy. And, if we do not recognize the Prophet (s), then we cannot recognize Imam Mahdi (‘a).

One, who realizes that there is a successor to the Prophet (s), but assumes that the one chosen at Saqifah can be the real successor, has not fully recognized the Prophet (s). This is because, he erroneously assumes that the Prophet (s) is nothing more than a leader of the Islamic world, or the country’s first person.

Such a person has not recognized the Prophet (s) as described by the following Qur’anic verse:

﴿مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ ۝ وَمَا يَنطِقُ عَنِ ٱلْهَوَىٰٓ ۝ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْىٌ يُوحَىٰ ۝ عَلَّمَهُۥ شَدِيدُ ٱلْقُوَىٰ﴾

"Your companion does not err, nor does he go astray Nor does he speak out of desire* It is naught but revelation that is revealed* which the Lord of Mighty Power has taught him."*[1]

If such a person had fully recognized the Prophet (s), then he would have realized that the Prophet's (s) utterances were not based on hunch, nor were they personal; rather, his statements were of an Infallible one, and he was God's genuine and honest delegate, and

﴿بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِۦ﴾

"Has with him clear proof from his Lord."[2]

He will realize that the Prophet (s) got all his knowledge from his Lord.[3] Such a person would never decide who the successor to the Prophet (s) could be.

Unless we recognize the Lemma reasoning,[4] we cannot recognize God, nor sense the need for Prophets and God's Messengers. If we recognize God and realize that He is our Creator, we will turn to Him and realize that He supplies us with subsistence and that judging us is in His power. We would know that we have to return to him because He is the source of all our scientific and pragmatic affairs. Under such conditions would we feel the need for God's Messenger? Then, in the light of such recognition, we would recognize the Law, which would lead us to prosperity, and the law which would lead us to misery.

1- *Qur'an 53:2-5.*
2- *Qur'an 11:17.*
3- See **al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.190.
4- Lemma reasoning means a reasoning which recognizes the effect through its causes.

Recognizing the Imam is the best way to die a Muslim

God’s prophets and messengers all advised mankind to die as Muslims. The Prophet Jacob (‘a) advised his sons:

﴿يَـٰبَنِيَّ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمُ ٱلدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ﴾

“O my sons, surely Allah has chosen for you this faith. Hereafter, die not unless you are Muslims.”[1]

Do not ever die non-Muslims. As a governor of Egypt and possessing immense power, Joseph (‘a) thanked God: “You have given me and to others the land and the kingdom. Give me the honor to carry out Jacob’s (‘a) advice and die a Muslim:

﴿رَبِّ قَدْ ءَاتَيْتَنِى مِنَ ٱلْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِى مِن تَأْوِيلِ ٱلْأَحَادِيثِ ۚ فَاطِرَ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ أَنتَ وَلِيِّۦ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْـَٔاخِرَةِ ۖ تَوَفَّنِى مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِى بِٱلصَّـٰلِحِينَ﴾

“My Lord! Thou hast given me of the kingdom and taught me the interpretation of sayings, Originator of the heavens and the earth! Thou art my guardian in this world and the hereafter; make me die a Muslim and join me with the good.”[2]

Since, in the eyes of Qur’an, an atheistic life equals death and a monotheistic life is equal to a real life, living and dying a Muslim depends on a man’s recognition of God’s Wali, the Imam of the time, and following his orders.

The true meaning of recognizing the Imam

The knowledge of the Imam’s name and that of his parents, his birth-date, the dates of his Imamate and its duration is the lowest degree of recognizing the Imam. This kind of knowledge, although necessary, is not sufficient in itself. The essence is to know the Imam genuinely. In the words of Imam Ali (‘a): “A man is wise if he is a monotheist, thinks like the Prophet (s), and acts like the successor to the Prophet (s).” This means it is urgent for us to recognize Allah, the

1- *Qur’an 2:132.*
2- *Qur’an 12:101.*

Prophet (s) and his successors, and in this way, to walk the path of the Qur'an and the Prophet's Family ('a).

Imam Ali ('a) said: "Recognize Allah through His Divinity and the Prophet (s) via his prophet hood."[1] Those who recognize Divinity are good God-knowers. Those who equal Divinity with God's Supreme Power, soon realize that God's Sacred Being possesses all features of perfection, and that His features and His very Being are the same. He is the God who is near man, closer than his jugular vein; He is the most Merciful. One who recognizes these ideas shall always see the entire world as the manifestation of God and he will see himself in God's presence. Similarly, the one who recognizes the criterion of prophet hood is a skillful Prophet-knower.

The Great Prophet of Islam (s) said: "By doing good, maintaining justice and being generous, know the Prophet (s) and his successors ('a)." Thus, what is significant about recognizing the Imam is not knowing his name alone, but knowing his traits, as Imam Ali ('a) stated. Honest people are those who recognize God through His traits; in the same way that the sun is recognized, not through its warmth and light, but by observing it.

As soon as the description reached this point,

The pen was broken and the paper torn.[2]

The sun is the reason for the sun:

If you are looking for reasons, do not avoid the sun.

If the shade is a sign of the sun,

Shams would give the light.

The sun's shade would make you

sleep as soon as Shams arrives on the horizon[3]

The best way to recognize Imam Mahdi ('a) is the way of Imam Ali ('a). The deep thinker would observe the scientific and practical perfection as well as justice and generosity in the perfect Man - the

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1- **Al-Tawhid,** Saduq, p.288.
2- **Mathnavi Ma'navi**, p.888, the fifth Notebook, line 4195.
3- Ibid, p.10, First Notebook, lines 116-118.

Imam, in such a way, that the more he observes the traits of the Imam, the more he will see Divine beauty in the person of Imam Mahdi (‘a).

Fruitful and Fruitless recognition

The Infallible Imam is the best human being. He possesses the best and most sublime Features of an approved human being in the most magnificent phase. This variety of human traits in the Infallible Imam make people love him. A good sample of this affection is shown by different people towards Imam Ali (‘a), and towards the Leader of Martyrs and the Master of Free men, Imam Husayn (‘a). The event of Karbala is recognized by all those who think clearly, and by those who are fond of ethical issues, and by those who have studied the history of man-kind. In this way, everybody loves Imam Husayn (‘a) in their own way. The inquisitive soul of man discovers his supreme human and heavenly traits, and feels humbled in front of this magnificent man; be he a Muslim, non-Muslim, Shiite or not.

A reasonable life and the avoidance of an ignorant death all depends on the recognition of an Imam whose specialty is doing good and establishing justice and benevolence. It means knowing the essence of the Infallible Imam and not merely being attracted towards his human traits.

The one who recognizes Imam Mahdi (‘a) as the Prophet’s (s) infallible successor, as one obeyed at all times. is present, and fully aware of our everyday affairs, and will help us on the Day of Judgment, would benefit from the Imam’s (‘a) immense knowledge and achieve the reasonable life and die a noble death.

An unbeliever cannot enjoy life, and since unbelief contrasts with faith, the manifestation of the light of faith in man is a true sign of humanity. Thus, a society, which suffers from a lack of faith is not a society of men. On the other hand, Faith and its benefits all depend on the recognition of the Imam of Our Time.

In order to arrive at the lofty heights of this recognition and realize Imam Ali’s (‘a) illuminous utterance, recognition of evil and good is essential. Whatever is approved by wisdom, the Qur’an and Sunnat is good, and jealousy, pride, self-conceitedness, hallucination, lust for

material things, living luxuriously and the like, are considered bad. The sublime traits and virtues, approved by both wisdom and narrations, are among man's good deeds.

The Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali ('a) clarified that, one who tries to order people around and assume himself to be a superman, is not the Imam. Rather, a genuine Imam is the one whose behavior is good, whose deeds are just and whose person is overflowing with benevolence. One who recognizes an Imam with these traits follows him. Imam Sadiq ('a),[1] when asked about the signs of the Promised Existent (i.e. Imam Mahdi ('a)), replied: "Such an Imam will be recognized by his full knowledge of Halal and Haram (the approved things and unapproved affairs), and his lack of dependence on others."[2]

Imamate is man's need and a Divine asset

A community of men needs a strong leader so that it can manage its affairs: "There is no escape for men from rulers, good or bad."[3] However, the issue of Imamate and Wilayah is more significant than people's worldly affairs and the need for the Imam does not rest on such affairs alone.

Prophethood and Imamate are explained by some scholars in the following manner: "Since man is a social and civic being and needs order, which is based on law, he is always in need of Prophets and Imams, who, by establishing laws and implementing them, ensure the improvement and progress of man."[4]

However, Khwja Nasir al-Din Tusi challenges this reasoning in the following manner: "This reasoning is not complete, because there are many societies, which have never adopted a religion nor followed any Prophet or Imam but have a better life than ours. They have a

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1- The narrator is Harith Ibn Mughireh who was one of the followers of Imam Baqir ('a) Imam Sadiq ('a) and Imam Kazim ('a); refer to **Rijal Allameh,** p.55; **Rijal Najashi**, p.139.
2- **Al-Ghaybah, Nu'mani**, p.242.
3- **Nahjul-Balagha,** sermon 40.
4- See **Gouhar Morad**, pp.360–361; **Al-Mizan,** vol.2, p.115; below *Qur'an 2: 213.*

civilization, a system of laws and an order managing their society. Thus, do not need Prophet hood or Imamate for our affairs to be managed properly. Rather, since we are eternal beings and since we have a long way before us, termed Resurrection, we need the Prophet and his successors to help us succeed. If we were to decay like plants after we died, we would not need the prophet and his successors to deal with our affairs. But after death, we are faced with the grave, the interval between death and resurrection (limbo), the resurrection, judgment, heaven and hell. We are ignorant of their very nature; faced with eternity.

“Any thought which comes to our mind and any act done by us, has a close relationship with our eternity. We need ethics to lead us from death to limbo and then from there to heaven. This is done only by Prophets who get their orders from God; Imams, too, receive orders from God.”[1]

However, note that this issue stated by Tusi is taken from Avicenna, who has referred to the issue of Prophethood in his chapters dealing with worship, asceticism, gnosticism, and the exact differences between worshippers, hermits and gnostics (learned men). Tusi has explained what Avicenna stated, and not criticised it.

Other scholars of the Qur’an and the Prophetic Family (Itrah) have referred to the issues of Prophethood and the election of Imams by the Prophet in many different ways, and evaluated the criteria for adopting such issues. One of them is Hisham Ibne Hakam whose dispute with Amr Ibne Obeyd Moatazeli is reported by Kulayni: Imam Sadiq (s) asked one of his students: “I have heard you had a discussion with Amr Ibn Obeyd on the issues of Imamah and Wilayah?” The student replied: “Yes, sir. But I do not dare to refer to it in your presence.” Imam Sadiq (s) said: “You are allowed to tell me all about it.”

Hisham said: “I took part in the discourse in the Basrah Mosque. He denied Wilayah and Imamah.

I: ‘Do you have eyes? Do you have ears and limbs?

He: ‘You are asking me irrational questions.’

1- See **Sharh al-Isharat wa al-Tanbihat**, vol.3, pp.1033-1035.

I: 'These are my questions and I need answers.'

He: 'Yes, I have eyes, ears and limbs.'

I; 'Besides these, do you have means for perception and sensation and wisdom, a heart?'

He: 'Yes.'

I: 'If you have eyes to see and ears to listen, then why do you need wisdom and a heart?

He: 'I need them so that through them I can keep my ears, eyes and my other organs from going astray.'

I: 'Hasn't God created Imams to guide people and the world in the same way as the human heart controls all man's organs? Is every reading and interpretation of religion correct? Is there anybody who has offered the last word to distinguish right from wrong? This role is only carried out by the Infallible Imam, who is the heart of this world, and who can correct all wrong-doings.'"

Upon hearing these words, Imam Sadiq ('a) asked his student: "Where did you learn these words?" Hisham replied: "I have learned them in your presence." Then Imam Sadiq ('a) said "I swear to God this issue was brought up in the books of Abraham and Moses."[1]

The turning point in the above reasoning is man's eternal life and his need for a teacher and a corrector of his beliefs, ethics and affairs. The teacher would lead him towards eternal prosperity and this confirms the necessity of the presence of the Prophets and the Infallible Ones.

Imamate, God's permanent Favor towards man

The Holy Qur'an mentions numerous favors for man:

﴿وَإِن تَعُدُّواْ نِعۡمَةَ ٱللَّهِ لَا تُحۡصُوهَآ﴾

1- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, pp.169-171.

"And if you were to count Allah's favors you would not be able to number them."[1]

Prophethood and Imamate are mentioned by God as His greatest Favors:

﴿لَقَدۡ مَنَّ ٱللَّهُ عَلَى ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ إِذۡ بَعَثَ فِيهِمۡ رَسُولاً﴾

"Certainly, Allah conferred a benefit upon the believers when He raised among them an Apostle from among themselves."[2]

And:

﴿وَنُرِيدُ أَن نَّمُنَّ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ ٱسۡتُضۡعِفُواْ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ وَنَجۡعَلَهُمۡ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجۡعَلَهُمُ ٱلۡوَٰرِثِينَ﴾

"We desired to bestow a favor upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the Imams, and to make them the heirs." [3]

In the first verse, Prophethood is referred to in the past tense because prophethood comes to an end despite the fact that the religion is permanent; but in the second verse concerning Imamate the future tense is used which emphasizes progression. It is as if God is saying "We shall always appoint Infallible Imams for people and raise the oppressed ones as Imams." The future tense indicates that the earth shall never remain Imam-less and as far as man and human societies live, there is need for Infallible religious leaders.

Imamate, God's special favor, is everlasting for people

One who does not recognize this Great Divine Favor, shall always be deprived of its niceties. He will not only deprive himself of its benefits, but also challenge the thankful Favor recognizers and wrongly claim that the Ja'fari Shiites are of the view that Imamate is one of God's favors and that favor necessarily stems from God. They are told that an Imam who does not see people and is not seen by

1- *Qur'an 16: 18.*
2- *Qur'an 3: 164.*
3- *Qur'an 28: 5.*

people is not a favor, because he has no connection with people. What could be a favor is a living Imam seen by people and who cares for people's needs, solves people's problems and answers people questions. Thus, this argument is not acceptable.

Although the above reasoning is entirely based on the claimer's ignorance of the truth of Imamate according to the Ja'fari school, Tusi's statement in his *Sharh e Tajrid,* is an answer to this skepticism. He says the very existence of the Imam is a favor, and his involvement in people's affairs is a second favor. The existence of the Imam, although concealed, is God's greatest favor.[1] That man of insight who realizes that Prophethood and Imamate are among God's greatest favors has a clear understanding of the concept of Imamate, and, as a result, he recognizes the Imam. Then he follows the Imam, receiving light and life's water from him.

"Life's water" stems from the center of one's soul. Wealth-gatherers are superficially alive but deeply dead, this is because they possess an animal-vegetarian life, and not a human life. But those endowed with knowledge will remain as long as the world lives. This is because they have enjoyed a human life and "life's water" has sprung from their deep soul.

1- See **Kashf al-Murad** pp.388-390.

CHAPTER TWO
THE SPECIAL IMAMATE

The continuation of Wilayah from Abraham (‘a) till the promised Existent [Imam Mahdi (‘a)]

﴿وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا مُحْسِنٌ وَظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِۦ مُبِينٌ﴾

“And of their off-springs are the doers of good, and also those who are clearly unjust to their own souls.”[1]

Abraham’s (‘a) off-springs are either doers of good or unjust to their own souls.

A doer of good does good both to himself and to others. Therefore, one who is generous towards others but hurts himself is not a doer of good. By observing what was said earlier and by considering the following verse, which is addressed to Abraham (‘a),

﴿لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِى ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ﴾

“My covenant does not include the unjust.”[2]

We find that Imamate only reached the Prophet’s (‘a) doers of good. Stating that Imamate would not reach the unjust, does not assume that this position would not reach the doers of good. Such an assumption would be wrong in its very basis.

Thus, Imamate reaches all Abraham’s (‘a) doers of good. This means all the Prophets and God’s men who were descendants of the Prophet (‘a) were Imams as well. Although the Qur’an does not mention the Imamate of all prophets, such as Moses (‘a), Jesus (‘a) or the Prophet of Islam (s), it can safely be said that all the doers of

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1- *Qur’an 37: 113.* The dual pronoun “Huma” in this verse refers to Ibrahim, and since Ishaq (‘a) is his son, Ishaq’s (‘a) off-springs are Ibrahim’s (‘a) off-springs as well.
2- *Qur’an 2: 124.*

good, from Ismael (‘a) and Isaac (‘a) to Moses (‘a), Jesus (‘a) and the Prophet of Islam (s), and to Imam Mahdi (‘a) have been true Imams.

The manifestation of the Light of Wilayah and Imamate cannot ever be denied to the sacred being of Mohammad (s), the last Prophet of God. Therefore, nobody can deny the fact that Imamate continued through him. Some minds are filled with the illusion that after the demise of the Great Prophet of Islam (s) Wilayah should be a thing of the past, despite the fact that the glorious dynasty of Imamate and Wilayah continued from Abraham up to Mohammad (s).

This illusion is erroneous because the successors of the prophets, especially the Infallible Imams, carry out the duties of the Prophet (s) because the innate wilayah is embedded in the being of the Infallible Imam. This Wilayah is in fact the guidance of Ummah and is ever-lasting:

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤۡتُونَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَهُمۡ رَٰكِعُونَ﴾

“Only Allah is your Wali and His Apostle, and those who believe, who keep up prayers and pay the poor-rate while they bow.”[1]

The last Prophet (s), at Ghadir Khumm, insisted on this Wilayah and declared: “Do I not have a greater right on you than yourselves?” Upon receiving a positive answer from the audience, he added, “for those who I am Mawla, Ali is Mawla as well.”[2]

It is the Infallible Wali, who is responsible for judging between people and interpreting the Qur’anic verses. Upon the demise of the Prophet of Islam (s), this Imamate was carried on by Imam Ali (‘a). He used reasoning, and through advice and arguments carried out God’s word. What he deemed as “halal” was halal forever, and what he declared as ‘haram” was haram or “forbidden’ forever. When he deems necessary, the Imam of our time will start the apparent caliphate, and through the management of the community, protect

1- *Qur’an 5: 55.*

2- **Al-Irshad,** vol.1, p.8 and p.196; **Al-Tawhid,** Saduq p.212; see also **Kashf al-Ghumma,** vol.1, p.237; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.21 p.387.

both the Ummah and the religion. This is because the presence of the Ummah and their allegiance is crucial for him:

"If Imam Mahdi ('a) had supporters now, he would carry out God's order and govern."[1]

The acceptance of his orders are obligatory as the orders of God:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤۡمِنٖ وَلَا مُؤۡمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥٓ أَمۡرًا أَن يَكُونَ لَهُمُ ٱلۡخِيَرَةُ مِنۡ أَمۡرِهِمۡۗ وَمَن يَعۡصِ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ فَقَدۡ ضَلَّ ضَلَٰلٗا مُّبِينٗا﴾

"And it behoves not a believing man and a believing woman that they should have any choice in their matter when Allah and his Apostle have decided a matter; and whoever disobeys Allah and His Apostle, he surely strays off a manifest straying."[2]

That Infallible, based on

﴿ٱلنَّبِيُّ أَوۡلَىٰ بِٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ مِنۡ أَنفُسِهِمۡ﴾

"*The prophet has a greater claim on the faithful than they have on themselves.*"[3]

Has the same religious right to guide people as the Last Prophet of God (s) did. This dynasty starts with Imam Ali ('a) and ends with Hujjat Ibn al-Hasan al-Mahdi ('a).

Imam Sadiq ('a) explained: "Prior to the Prophet's (s) demise, God sent a book sealed with gold to him, saying: 'O Mohammad, this is your will to the elite of your Household.' The Prophet (s) asked Gabriel: 'Who are the elite of my Household?' Gabriel said: 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib and his children.' The Prophet (s), giving the book to Imam Ali ('a), said: 'Open up the seal and act according to the will.' Imam Ali did so, and then he gave it to his son, Imam Hasan ('a). By opening up another seal, he acted accordingly and submitted it to Imam Husayn ('a). Upon opening up the seal, Imam Husayn saw it

1- **Nahjul-Balagha,** Sermon 3, paragraph 16.
2- *Qur'an 33: 36.*
3- *Qur'an 33: 6.*

written there: ‘Together with your group, leave home for martyrdom because if you are not with them, they would not benefit from the asset of martyrdom; you sell your life to God. Imam Husayn (‘a) then gave the book to Ali Ibn al Husayn (‘a). Opening up the book, he found it written: ‘Be silent and stay home and upto your death, pray to God.’ He carried out the order. Then he gave the book to his son Mohammad Ibn Ali (‘a). Upon opening up the book, he found that his mission was to read narrations to people and issue religious commands (Fatwa), and “do not be afraid of anybody except God, because nobody can hurt you.” Then, he gave the book to his son, Ja’far Ibn Mohammad (‘a). Upon opening the book, he found his mission was to recite narrations to people, to issue religious commands and to spread the knowledge of the household; “Confirm your honest ancestors and do not be afraid of anybody except God because you will be safe.” Now he has submitted the book to Musa Ibn Ja’far (s) and he will give it to the next coming Imam. He will do so till Imam Mahdi (‘a) will rise.”[1]

News delivered by the Imams (‘a) concerning Imam Mahdi (‘a)

One of the numerous tasks of the Prophets (‘a) has been to verify the previous Prophets and give the good news of those coming after:

﴿مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ﴾

“Verifying that which is before it.”[2]

And

﴿وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي﴾

“Giving the good news of an Apostle who will come after me.”[3]

All prophets stem from a unique reality and they all talk of just one Being, and guide people towards this single point. For this reason,

1- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, pp.279 – 281.
2- *Qur’an 2: 97.*
3- *Qur’an 61: 6.*

every Prophet has confirmed the previous Prophet and has set the stage for the next coming Prophet.

The Imams (‘a) did the same. This confirmation and the giving of good news indicate continuity in the system of Wilayah, which is similar to the system of Prophethood.

The appearance of Imam Mahdi (‘a)

At the dawn of the fifteenth day of the month of Sha’ban 255 (AH) Imam Mahdi (‘a) was born, blessing the whole world with his birth. He set the stage for the fulfillment of God’s promise for the victory of the oppressed and their Imamate:

﴿وَنُرِيدُ أَن نَّمُنَّ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ ٱسْتُضْعِفُواْ فِي ٱلأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ ٱلْوَٰرِثِينَ﴾

“And We desired to bestow a favor upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the Imams, and to make them the heirs.”[1]

He is the last Imam of the sacred Household of the Prophet (s). His great ancestor, Mohammad (s), while talking to Zahra (‘a) about his blessings, said: “God has given us assets which others lack: Both Hasan and Husayn (‘a) are the children of the ummah.”[2] Then he talked about Imam Mahdi (‘a), the promised Existent, saying that, “Mahdi (‘a) is ours and from us belongs to this ummah.”[3]

The sacred genealogy of Imam Mahdi (‘a)

None of the sects of Islam dispute the coming of Imam Mahdi (‘a), but there is disagreement concerning his genealogy. Based on numerous Islamic narrations, Shiites believe that Imam Mahdi (‘a) is one of the Aal-e-Mohammad and the ninth son of Husayn Ibn Ali Ibn Abi Talib (‘a).

1- *Qur’an 28: 5.*
2- **Al-Ghaybah,** Tusi, p.191; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.36, p.370.
3- **Al-Ghaybah,** Tusi, p.191; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.36, p.370.

The great scholars of the Islamic world, too, are of the same belief. In the book called “Yawaqit” of the famous scholar Muhy al-Din Ibn Arabi, in Ishrat al-Sa‘ah writes:

The expression used by Mohy al-din, in Chapter 366 of *Fotuhat* runs like this: “Be aware that the appearance of Mahdi (‘a) is inevitable… he is of the genealogy of the Prophet (s) and is one of the sons of Fatimah (s) and the grandson of Husayn Ibn Ali. His father is Imam Hasan Askari, son of Imam Ali Naqi, son of Imam Mohammad Taqi, son of Imam Ali Rida, son of Imam Musa al-Kazim, son of Imam Jafar As-Sadiq, son of Imam Mohammad al-Baqir, son of Imam Zein al-Abedin, Ali, son of Imam Husayn, son of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Peace be upon them all.[1]

Such an exact recording of the names of the Household shows the significance of the issue and the endeavors of the scholars of Divine sciences to maintain the Islamic ideology. However, these days there is no mention of the above geneology; instead, the ambiguous and misleading expression “Jaddeh al-Hasan Ibn Ali Ibn Abi Talib,”[2] is recorded. Whereas Shaarani wrote the above mentioned issue in the year 958 (AH), and reported: ‘At the time of writing this Imam Mahdi (‘a) is 706 years old.’[3] The discrepancy between Shaarani’s report and that of others clearly show that distortion regarding books written on the Household is a common practice.

The Fifteenth of Sha’ban, The “Qadr” Night of the Household

The birth of the Wali of God provided people with the best kind of blessings because, “He is an asset for all human beings.” His very essence would make every human being on the earth a beneficiary of his Being. The fifteenth of Sha’ban is a blessed night which is similar, in significance, to many other nights of Qadr. It is said the night of Qadr is so great that God has sworn that He would answer any need of His servents.[4] As one of the supreme features of this night, the Prophet of Islam (s) stated: “On the occasion of the fifteenth of

1- See **al-Futuhat al-Makkiyah,** vol.3, p.327; **Al-Yawaqit wa al-Jawahir,** p.422.
2- **Al-Futuhat al-Makkiyah,** vol.3, p.327.
3- **Al-Yawaqit wa al-Jawahir,** p.422.
4- **Al-Amali,** Yusi, p.297; **Wasa’il al-Shi’ah,** vol.8, p.106.

Sha'ban, God forgives the sins of His servants to the amount of all the wool of the sheep of the Bani Kalb Tribe and this shows the significance of such a night."

Imam Sadiq ('a), indicates the significance of this night of Sha'ban by stating: "In the same way that God gave the Night of Qadr to the Prophet (s), He gave us, The Household, the fifteenth of Sha'ban."

Imam Baqir ('a) said, "The night of the fifteenth of Sha'ban is one of most precious nights after the Night of Qadr. During that night God provides his servants with His Blessings and Forgives them. Therefore, try hard to come near God during this night because God has sworn by His magnanimity that He would never turn down anyone of His servants. Therefore, pray to God and thank him abundantly."

On the night of the fifteenth of Sha'ban, the Prophet of Islam (s) told Ayesha "At this time all the death dates are written down and all the subsistence is distributed among God's servants. God will forgive his servant's sins to the amount of all the hairs of the sheep of the Bani Kalb tribe. God would send His angels to the earth. These angels first arrive in Mecca."

The Prophet (s) asked Ayesha: "Do you know what night is tonight? This night is the fifteenth night of Sha'ban. Tonight the orders for death of people are issued and subsistence is distributed among God's servants."[1]

The equality of Imam Mahdi's ('a) Birth Night and the Night of Qadr

In accordance with the above statement, it is the birth of an Infallible ('a) who is equal to the Holy Qur'an; thus, it becomes the night of Qadr. And on the basis of the fact that the birthdays of both the Prophet (s) and Fatimah ('a) are among nights of Qadr, the birth of Mahdi ('a) is also considered to be a night of Qadr. Since Imam Mahdi ('a) is the essence of the Household, or we could say the essence of all perfect human beings, his birthnight has become one of the nights of Qadr. We observe the birth of the last Infallible ('a),

1- **Fatha'il al-Shahr al-Thalatha**, p.62; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.94, p.89.

starting from the fifteenth of Sha’ban till the nights of the month of Fasting (Ramadhan).

The festival of the birthday of Imam Mahdi (‘a)

The Holy Qur’an considers glorifying the signs of God (Qur’an verses) as a result of the piety of hearts:

﴿وَمَن يُعَظِّمْ شَعَـٰٓئِرَ ٱللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِن تَقْوَى ٱلْقُلُوبِ﴾

“*And whoever respects the signs of Allah, this surely is the outcome of the piety of hearts.*”[1]

The sacred Being of the Infallible Imam (‘a) is the best of these signs of God. Glorifying such days is an example of worshipping God.

Some activities, such as preparing huge cakes, and illuminating houses are irrelevant to the sacred birthday of the Essence of Creation. This is because in communist China, Japan and other atheist communities, such activities are done on the occasions of worthless festivals. A birthday ceremony related to Imam Mahdi (‘a), should hold special programs. One of the outcomes of the appearance of Imam Mahdi (‘a) is the maturity of people’s wisdom and the discovery of the treasure-houses of man’s understanding. On these days, activities should be carried out which could be referable to human understanding.

How to recognize Imam Mahdi (‘a)

The reappearance of Imam Mahdi (‘a) has always been a significant issue. Regarding this important event, all the Infallibles (‘a), from The Prophet of God (s) to Imam Askari (‘a), have referred to this Imam’s specific features. The number of the narrations related to this Imam, both by the Shiite scholars and non-Shiite ones is tremendous.

Mohammad Ibn Uthman Amri says: ‘I heard my father say that he was with Imam Hasan Askari (‘a) and asked him concerning what the Prophet (s) had claimed; ‘Anybody who dies without recognizing his Imam dies a death of ignorance.’ Imam Hasan Askari (‘a) said: ‘Yes; this is a fact, and there is no doubt about it, in the same way that

1- *Qur’an 22: 32.*

nobody ever doubts that today is a day.' Then my father asked him: 'Upon your passing away, who will be the Imam?' Referring to the sacred name of Imam Mahdi ('a), the Imam ('a) said: 'His disappearance is a long one during which some will be distressed, some destroyed and some become skeptics.'[1]

The disappearance of the promised Existent (s) seems hard to believe by many people, and skepticism poisons the minds of many. Some doubtfully ask themselves how it is possible for a man to live more than a thousand years. Some seriously doubt his reappearance.

On the other hand, the time of reappearance of the Imam ('a) is not known, despite the fact that we must always wait for his appearance. And, if God-forbid, his appearance is not soon the doubts and skepticism will prolong. But what should we do not to reject such destructive doubts? How can we genuinely recognize the Imam ('a)? The only solution to these problems is the recognition of the legal guardian, and this can only happen by asking God and through our endeavors.

Some special students of the Infallibles ('a) always raised the issue of how to recognize the promised Imam Mahdi ('a). Regarding this, Zurarah states: I have heard Imam Sadiq ('a) saying: "Our upholder will be absent for a long time prior to his appearance." I asked him for the reason and he replied: "If he had been present, he would have been killed." Then, the Imam ('a) continued: "O Zurarah: he is the one people will wait for, but people will doubt his birth. Some will say his father did not have such a son; some say he is not born yet; some say he is absent; some say he was born two years before his father's death. But we are waiting for the promised Existent. However, God wants to test the Shiites and in this hard test the weak suffer from doubts and skepticism."

Zurarah, terrified by this world of doubts, asked Imam Sadiq ('a): "What should I do if I am present at that terrifying time?" The Imam answered: "If you happen to be at that time, remember this supplication: 'O God let us know Your being; if you Do not do so, then we will never be able to recognize your Prophet; and if we do

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1- **Kamal al-Din,** vol.2, p.81; **Kifayat al-Athar**, p.296; **Kashf al-Ghumma,** vol.2, p.528.

not know your Prophet, then we will not be able to recognize your Imam. O my God, make us recognize your Imam or else we will be misled.’”[1]

A supplication is not only a collection of words for reading or asking for something. Rather, the supplications of the Infallibles (‘a) contain deep knowledge and profitable lessons. Thinking on these precious supplications and carrying them out result in one’s prosperity in the same way that Zurarah was able to solve his personal problem through this supplication.

There are numerous ways to recognize the unique personality of Imam Mahdi (‘a). One of these ways is to survey the supplications come down to us from Imam Mahdi (‘a) himself, or the narrations delivered by other Imams (‘a) concerning Imam Mahdi (‘a).

The way we understand Imam Ali’s (‘a) program by reading his Nahjul Balagha, and Imam Husayn’s (‘a) program by analyzing his statements concerning the event of Karbala, and Imam Sayyad’s (‘a) program by reading Sahifah Sajjadiyyah, we can easily understand Imam Mahdi’s (‘a) program by delving into his supplications. An Imam’s supplication describes the features of his Imamate and his duties towards his Ummah.

Imam Mahdi (s) is only recognizable in the following way: “Recognize God through God, and the Prophets (s) through their recommending doing good, and their justice and benevolence.”[2] However, this is not, by itself, sufficient because it is not possible to recognize the Imam only through his recommending doing good. Many recommend people to do good. In another narration it says: ‘By doing good.[3] and not only recommending doing good.’ This is because the Imam is only recognizable through his doing good, his justice and benevolence, and not through ordering or recommending others to do so. The one who is the representative of God does not just recommend others to do good; rather, his very nature is good, his manners involve justice and benevolence. If a person has recognized the good, he has no doubt found goodness in the person of Imam.

1- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.339; **Kamal al-Din,** vol.2, p.12.
2- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.185; **Al-Tawhid,** Saduq p.286.
3- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.185; **Al-Tawhid,** Saduq p.286.

The best way to recognize Imam Mahdi ('a)

In order to recognize God, one has to see the worldly signs or the holy verses of the Qur'an. In other cases, he may recognize God through "Recognize Allah through Allah",[1] or "You led me to You through Yourself"[2]

Such a man would tell others why they consider God absent from their views while they can easily find Him in front of them. God has declared,

﴿سَنُرِيهِمۡ ءَايَٰتِنَا فِي ٱلۡأٓفَاقِ وَفِيٓ أَنفُسِهِمۡ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمۡ أَنَّهُ ٱلۡحَقُّ﴾

"We will soon show them Our signs in the universe and in their own souls, until it will become quite clear to them that it is the truth."[3]

Then God mentions

﴿أَوَلَمۡ يَكۡفِ بِرَبِّكَ﴾

"Is it not sufficient as your Lord?"[4]

He mentions knowing God through

﴿أَنَّهُۥ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖ شَهِيدٌ﴾

"He is a witness over all things."[5]

Before seeing anything, a person first sees God. Prior to observing the reasons for the presence of God, he would see God Himself. This word "witness" in the above verse is not the subject;[6] rather it is the

1- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.85; **Al-Tawhid,** Saduq, p.286.
2- **Iqbal al-A'mal,** p.335; **Al-Balad al-Amin**, p.205, "The supplication of Abi Hamza Thamali at the dawn". **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.84, p.339 "Nafilah of the dawn."
3- *Qur'an 41:53.*
4- *Qur'an 41:53.*
5- *Qur'an 41:53.*
6- See **Tafsir al-Bahr al-Muhit,** vol.7, p.482; **Majma' al-Bayan,** vol.9,10, p.30.

object. If it were the subject, then God would see everything around;[1] then we would not need His signs. This verse claims that God does not need to be known through His signs. Thus, the word “witness” here means “the observed one. Thus, we would arrive at the following conclusion: In order to recognize Allah, you would not need His signs, because God is witnessed at every moment by us human beings. God, whose presence is infinite,[2]

﴿تَحُولُ بَيْنَ ٱلْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِۦ﴾

“Intervenes between man and his heart.”[3]

He does not have to be felt by asking the others,

﴿أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُۥ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ﴾

“Is it not sufficient as your Lord. He is a witness over all things.”[4]

This is the most useful way of recognizing God; it is also available to everyone. This road, is the way of one’s heart for carrying out of which no university education is necessary. The best way to recognize the Prophet of God (s) and the Infallibles (‘a) is through one’s heart.

The Qur’an and the Infallibles (‘a): one truth, two manifestations

The Holy Qur’an and the sacred Infallibles (‘a) are one truth but two manifestations. On the surface, they look different. But they are interrelated. To prove the significance of the Qur’an one can use the Infallibles as a valid reason. The most respectable Prophet of Islam (s) has referred to this unity through the following repeated narration: “Verily, am leaving among you two precious things: the

1- **Al-Tafsir al-Munir**, vol.25, p.15.
2- **Al-Tawhid,** Saduq, p.306.
3- *Qur’an 8:24.*
4- *Qur’an 41:53.*

Book of Allah and my progeny. These two will never separate from each other until they meet me at the Pond of Kawthar."[1]

The Household (‘a) possesses all the traits of the Qur’an: each other until they meet me at the Pond of Kawthar. The Infallibles (‘a) possess all the virtues of the Holy Qur’an and any defect not attributable to the Qur’an is not attributable to the Infallibles (‘a) as well.

The practical way of these two shall never change. The acts of the Imams (‘a) interpret God’s speech, and the Holy Qur’an is the scientific and pragmatic basis for the Infallibles (‘a). The Infallible (‘a) would never issue orders disapproved by the Qur’an. In the same way, they would not prohibit acts deemed obligatory by the Holy Qur’an. The way to salvation can never be found through the Qur’an minus the Infallibles (‘a), nor the Infallibles (‘a) minus the Qur’an. The Thaqalain motto cannot materialize without these two precious items, because they are inter-related.

Manifestations of the unity of the Qur’an and the Infallibles (‘a)

The uniqueness of the sacred and honorable Infallibles (‘a) and the significance of the Holy Qur’an is a manifestation of the unity between them: the Holy Qur’an is unique in every respect; no other book can ever boast of being equal to it. This is because it is supreme both in its eloquent style and in its unique ways of reasoning. Not even one irrational word can be found in its entirety:

﴿لَّا يَأۡتِيهِ ٱلۡبَٰطِلُ مِنۢ بَيۡنِ يَدَيۡهِ وَلَا مِنۡ خَلۡفِهِۦ﴾

"False hood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it."[2]

One of the Qur’an’s specific traits is its inviting people to challenge it. In many verses, the Holy Qur’an calls those who deny the Qur’an’s

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1- **Al-Amali,** Tusi, p.548; see **Kamal al-Din,** vol.1, p.345. This honored narration with minor differences, has been narrated by most narrators (such as Sahih Muslim, Musnad, Ahmed Hanbal…). Those interested may refer to al-Ghadir by Ayatollah Amini. **Al-Ghadir**, vol.1, p.30, p.176; vol.3, p.297; vol.7, p.176; vol.10, p.278; also refer to **Kanzul ‘Ummal**, vol.13, p.104.
2- *Qur’an 41: 42.*

genuineness and nobility and its divine source, to write even one verse comparable to the Qur'anic verses. Referring to their inability, the Holy Qur'an states:

﴿قُل لَّئِنِ ٱجْتَمَعَتِ ٱلْإِنسُ وَٱلْجِنُّ عَلَىٰٓ أَن يَأْتُوا۟ بِمِثْلِ هَٰذَا ٱلْقُرْءَانِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِۦ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا﴾

"Say: If men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of this Qur'an, they could not bring the like of it, though some of them were aiders of others."[1]

﴿وَإِن كُنتُمْ فِى رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا۟ بِسُورَةٍ مِّن مِّثْلِهِۦ وَٱدْعُوا۟ شُهَدَآءَكُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ﴾

"And if you are in doubt as to that which we have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your witnesses besides Allah if you are truthful."[2]

﴿أَمْ يَقُولُونَ ٱفْتَرَىٰهُ ۖ قُلْ فَأْتُوا۟ بِعَشْرِ سُوَرٍ مِّثْلِهِۦ مُفْتَرَيَٰتٍ وَٱدْعُوا۟ مَنِ ٱسْتَطَعْتُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ﴾

"Or, do they say: he has forged it. Say: then bring ten forged chapters like it and call upon whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful."[3]

In the same way that the holy Book of God does not have a comparable book, the Infallibles ('a) are incomparable. All comparisons are baseless. Regarding this, the Prophet of Islam (s) has declared: "None of us Infallible ones can ever be compared to any

1- *Qur'an 17: 88.*
2- *Qur'an 2: 23.*
3- *Qur'an 11: 13.*

servant of God;"[1] in the same way Imam Ali (‘a) has said : "Do not compare any one of us with anybody else."[2]

We cannot say that the Qur'an is like another book but a little better; nor that Imam Mahdi (‘a) is like another pious servant of God but a little better. We should say that the Qur'an is the same as Imam Mahdi (‘a), but it is silent; and Imam Mahdi (‘a) is the same as the Qur'an, but vocal. Each one of them can be defined in terms of the known facts about the other one.

Both the Qur'an and the Infallibles (‘a) give life to human societies and the Holy Qur'an describes the Prophet's (s) inviting people to Islam:

﴿يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱسْتَجِيبُواْ لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ﴾

"O you who believe! Answer the call of Allah and His Apostle when he calls you to that which gives you life."[3]

Thus, both revelation and prophethood provide human societies with life. Since both the Qur'an and the Infallibles are closely related, answering the call of the Infallibles (‘a) is life-giving as well.

Imam Mahdi (‘a), the forerunner of beliefs, etiquettes and actions

The Imam (‘a) is the forerunner of the beliefs, etiquettes and acts of the ummah. Any right belief of any believer goes back to the Imam's (‘a) belief in the way that any Muslim's good act stems from the Imam's (‘a) acts. The one who performs his prayer early does so because the Imam (‘a) performs his prayer early. Such a person imitates his Imam (‘a) in the right way.

Imam Rida (‘a) states that a believer's belief becomes complete when he enlivens in himself God Almighty's way, the Messenger of God's (s) way and the Imam's (‘a) way. God confirms His way:

1- **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.65, p.45, **Kashf al-Ghumma,** vol.1, p.43.
2- **Nahjul-Balagha,** Sermon 2.
3- *Qur'an 8: 24.* In this verse one single verb is attributed to both God and the prophet: They say the same thing.

﴿عَٰلِمُ ٱلۡغَيۡبِ فَلَا يُظۡهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيۡبِهِۦٓ أَحَدًا ۝٢٦ إِلَّا مَنِ ٱرۡتَضَىٰ مِن رَّسُولٖ﴾

“The Knower of the unseen! So He does not reveal His secrets to any, except to him whom He chooses as an Apostle.”[1]

Concerning the Prophet’s way, God orders the Prophet (s) to tolerate people saying,

﴿خُذِ ٱلۡعَفۡوَ وَأۡمُرۡ بِٱلۡعُرۡفِ﴾

“Take to forgiveness and enjoin good.”[2]

Concerning the Imam’s (‘a) way, he stated “What you should learn from your Imam (‘a) is patience in the face of hardships.”[3]

The Imam’s Wilayah becomes perfect when he completely observes God Almighty’s way and the Prophet’s (s) way. This is because Prophets and their substitutes are God’s deputies meant to correct people. God’s Prophets and the Infallibles are all Imams, and the first Imam, in the right sense of the word, is God Himself even if such epithets are not usually employed in God’s case.

The acts of the Imam, Prophets and God are behavior models for people to follow. A believer’s Faith becomes complete only when he has adopted the acts of God Almighty, of the Prophet (s) and of the Imam (‘a) and has enlivened in himself their tradition. Such a believer should enliven in himself God’s traditions, because any trait, which is infinite in God can be adopted by a believer on a smaller scale. The act of not revealing secrets to any one else is just an example, and it is not that from God’s traits only this one can be adopted by a believer. This is only one of God’s traits.

It is desirable for one to adopt God’s epithets, and benefit from them for his own improvement, and since Prophets and the Infallibles are manifestations of God’s epithets, people should closely imitate their behavior.

1- *Qur’an 72:26-27.*
2- *Qur’an 7:199.*
3- **Al-Kafi,** vol.2, p.241.

The Infallible Imam, The Knower of people's acts

The Imam is the manifestation of God Almighty's epithets and therefore he is well aware of the acts of people. He is in full control of people's affairs, and his control is not limited.

The reports of people's affairs is presented to Imam Mahdi ('a) every Monday and Thursday and this presentation is referred to by phrases such as "everyday," "every night"[1] and "every morning" in the narrations of the Infallible and this is taken to mean that Imam Mahdi ('a) is constantly aware of people's affairs. In the same way that our souls are aware of our bodies, the Imam is aware of our souls. It is as if he dwells in our souls. The notion that the Imam is the soul of souls can be understood from the Qur'anic verse:

﴿ٱلنَّبِيُّ أَوۡلَىٰ بِٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ مِنۡ أَنفُسِهِمۡ﴾

"The Prophet has a greater claim on the faithful than they have on themselves."[2]

It is because of the superiority of the Prophet's (s) soul over people's souls. It is as if the people's souls were just a body for the Prophet's (s) soul. Imamate is nothing but the Caliphate of God and Imam Rida ('a) said "The Imam is the Caliph of God Almighty, deputy of the Prophet (s) and of Imam Ali ('a)."[3] The Imam has all the traits of the Prophet (s) and God's epithets.

To love the Infallible is one of the pillars of religion

The Perfect Man, who is the manifestation of God's epithets, is also the manifestation of the holy epithet: "He is the First and the Last." And the Infallibles are the most perfect of all. Based on this, the beginning and end of the world are in their hands. Imam Ali ('a) asked the Prophet (s) several times "In whose hands is the end of time?" "Who is going to rule the world justly?"

The Prophet (s) replied, "It is in our hands."

1- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.219.
2- *Qur'an 33: 6.*
3- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.200.

‘The world begins with us and ends with us.”[1]

The Household (‘a) has a great role in the creation and will have a significant role in its final stages. This is because the Perfect Man, with God’s permission, has a significant role both at the start and the end of the world.

Love and affection for these sacred beings educates people and teaches them to adopt God’s temperament, therefore, deemed obligatory by God. This show of affection by us towards these precious beings is not formal and superficial; rather, it is the essence of religion. It is because issues of Islam are of two sorts: Some are absolutely obligatory and pivotal, and some are minor.

Concerning the pivotal issues of our religion, both the Divine leader and their students have done a great deal. Jabir Ibn Abdullah Ansari, one of the great disciples of The Prophet (s), who became blind towards the end of his life, lived from the days of the Prophet (s) till the time of Imam Baqir (‘a). He was able to meet all the Imams (‘a). He used to walk along the alleys of the Ansar saying, “Train your children to love and care for Imam Ali (‘a).”[2]

This method of educating people to love the Household (‘a) shows that propagating and spreading love for the Household (‘a) could not be among the minor issues. This was constantly done by the honorable disciples of the Prophet (s), who, even in old age, used to visit the houses of people to train them to show love and care towards the members of the Household (‘a).

Overcoming the difficulty in recognizing Imam Mahdi (‘a)

Comprehending the Promised Existent, Imam Mahdi (‘a), whose presence is ever-lasting but hidden, is a difficult issue indeed. We can not understand some religious knowledge simply because it is hard to grasp. However, through our confidence in Almighty God we can. As Imam Mohammad Taqi (‘a) said: “Confidence in getting help from God is of great consequence and it is a ladder that helps rising to any

1- **Al-Amali,** Tusi, p.66.
2- **Al-Amali,** Saduq, p.71.

lofty position."[1] The key to this success is to get rid of the selfish acts and hypocrisy, and not set traps for God's servants.

Solomon tells you to listen to al-Tayr;

You are the trap, that is why the bird is frightened by you,

Go, become the nest; Go, become the nest;

If Love shows herself to you, become a mirror;

If Love shows you her hair, Go become a comb, Go become a comb.

For a time you were just earth, then you were animal;

Then you changed into a lovely being;

Now go, become the soul of souls, the soul of souls.[2]

Imam Mahdi ('a) the manifestation of "the Light of the Heavens and the Earth"

There are many narrations concerning the existence of God's Proof at all times. Examples are:

"If the earth is left without an Imam it will show anger;"[3]

"If the earth is left without an Imam even for one hour, it will show anger towards its dwellers;"[4]

'The earth shall not remain without an Imam; if it did, it would show anger towards its dwellers."[5]

"It is because of the Imam that the heavens do not fall on the earth."[6] The conclusion that we may arrive at is the fact that Almighty God protects the heavens and the earth through Wilayah, on which the whole world rests.

The sacred being of Imam Mahdi ('a) is more lofty and sublime than the sun or the moon. His special feature is that he is the manifestation of

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1- **A'lam al-Din**, p.309; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.75, p.363.
2- Shams Tabrizi poetical works, p.798, No.2130.
3- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.179.
4- **Al-Ghaibah,** Nu'mani, p.141; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.51, p.113.
5- Kifayat al-Athar, p.162, **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.36, p.338.
6- **Al-Balad al-Amin**, p.302; **Man La Yahduruh al-Faqih,** vol.2, p.615.

﴿نُورُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ﴾

“The light of the heavens and the earth.”[1]

The light of the sun which stems from him, and which light’s up the moon, has a feature which is threatened by

﴿إِذَا ٱلشَّمۡسُ كُوِّرَتۡ﴾

“When the sun is covered.”

This light of the Galaxy will die at the end; but the delegate of Almighty God, who is the manifestation of *“the light of the Heavens and the Earth,”* will neither perish nor weaken. This is the status of the Imam in the eyes of Allah.

Imam Mahdi (‘a) is the closest man to Abraham (‘a)

The sacred being of the last Prophet (s), is closest to Abraham (‘a):

﴿إِنَّ أَوۡلَى ٱلنَّاسِ بِإِبۡرَٰهِيمَ لَلَّذِينَ ٱتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَٰذَا ٱلنَّبِيُّ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ﴾

“Most surely the nearest of the people of Abraham are those who followed him and this Prophet and those who believe, and Allah is the guardian of the believers.”[2]

The reason for this closeness is the fact that what Abraham (‘a) had seen, the Prophet (s) too, saw.

“The heart was not untrue in making him see what he saw,”

“What caused him to see well also caused Mohammad to see.”

﴿مَا كَذَبَ ٱلۡفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰٓ﴾

“The heart did not deny what it saw.”[3]

1- *Qur’an 24:35.*
2- *Qur’an 3: 68.*
3- *Qur’an 53: 11.*

"Those who were chosen as friends and companions by Abraham (‘a) were taken as companions by Mohammad (s) as well."

﴿إِنَّ وَلِيِّيَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِي نَزَّلَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَۖ وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّى ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ﴾

"Surely my guardian is Allah, who revealed the Book, and He befriends the good."[1]

"What Abraham (‘a) avoided was avoided by Mohammad (s) as well."

﴿أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ بَرِيٓءٞ مِّنَ ٱلۡمُشۡرِكِينَ وَرَسُولُهُۥٓ﴾

"Allah and His Apostle are free from liability to the idolaters."[2]

Then the Prophet (s) came closer and closer to Allah:

﴿ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّىٰ ۝٨ فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوۡسَيۡنِ أَوۡ أَدۡنَىٰ﴾

"Then he drew near, then he bowed, so he was the measure of two bows or closer still."[3]

Then Mohammad (s) sacrificed something which Abraham (‘a) had done before. He sent to the alter, Imam Husayn Ibn Ali (‘a), who preferred a death of dignity to obeying vagabonds, until he was beheaded for the protection of the safety of the Ka’ba. The secret of this event lay in the statement of the Prophet (s): "I belong to Husayn and Husayn belongs to me."[4]

On the other hand, Imam Husayn (‘a) says that he had heard from the Prophet of Allah (s):

"Anybody who sees a tyrannical ruler doing what God has deemed haram (religiously illegal), and breaking God’s laws, and performing

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1- *Qur’an 7: 196.*
2- *Qur’an 9: 3.*
3- *Qur’an 53:8-9.*
4- **Al-Irshad,** vol.2, p.127.

oppressive, unjust deeds, must strive against him. If he refuses to fight against this tyrant, he will be put in the Fire.”[1]

For this reason, Imam Husayn (‘a) chose to sacrifice himself and his close followers for the supreme aim of protecting Allah’s religion from harm and to defend people against tyranny.

The statement about Imam Mahdi (‘a) clearly shows that at the beginning of his justice-spreading movement against tyranny, he will perform his prayers on the footprint of Abraham (‘a) and announce himself as the individual closest to the Prophets, especially Abraham (‘a) and the Prophet of Islam (s). It reads : “When the Qa’im (Imam Mahdi (‘a)) starts his revolution, he will first enter Almasjed al-haram and then will visit the place of Abraham (‘a). He will offer two rak‘ats and then say, ‘O people, I am the closest to Adam (‘a) I am the closest to Abraham (‘a), I am the closest to Ismael (‘a), I am the closest to Mohammad (s). Then he will raise his hands towards Heaven, saying

﴿أَمَّن يُجِيبُ ٱلْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ ٱلسُّوٓءَ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خُلَفَآءَ ٱلْأَرْضِ ۗ أَءِلَٰهٌ مَّعَ ٱللَّهِ ۚ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ﴾

“He, who answers the distressed one who calls upon Him and removes the evil, and He will make you successors in the earth. Is there a god besides Allah? Little is it that you mind.”[2]

The Last of the Imams, the unique Heir of virtues

Imam Mahdi (‘a) possesses a specific trait, which the other Imams do not possess, and that is being the heir of the earth. Other Imams became Imams through heritage and then let it go down to others through heritage. But in the eloquent words of Sayyid Haider Amuli, Imam Mahdi (‘a) is a unique heir. He is the only heir inheriting all the virtues of his predecessors, and since he is the last one, no body will inherit this position after him.

1- **Tarikh Tabari,** vol.3, p.306; **Ihqaq Al-Haq,** vol.11, p.609; see **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.44, p.382.

2- *Qur’an 27: 62* and **Ta’wil al-Ayat**, p.399; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.51, p.59.

Sayyid Haider Amuli has learned this point from the Qur'anic verse:

﴿وَنُرِيدُ أَن نَّمُنَّ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ ٱسْتُضْعِفُواْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ ٱلْوَٰرِثِينَ﴾

"And, We desired to bestow a favor upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the Imams, and to make them the heirs."[1]

The syntactic structure of the sentence leads us to understand that only Imam Mahdi ('a) could be the heir.[2]

Khatam al-Awlia' (the last of the Imams) has herited all the virtues from the previous Prophets and Imams. For this reason all the previous miracles of the previous Prophets have come down to him. This is because he is supposed to carry out all the objectives of the previous Prophets and enliven all the dead lands with the light of justice.

In the verse 'and to make them the Imams, and to make them the heirs," the word "heirs" is used as a plural noun and refers to a singular antecedent. The same thing has taken place in the following verse, which refers exclusively to Imam Ali (s) despite the fact that the pronoun is in the plural form:

﴿وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَهُمْ رَٰكِعُونَ﴾

"Only Allah is your Wali and His Apostle and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the poor-rate while they bow."[3]

Imam Mahdi ('a), the manifestation of God's knowledge and Power

The Infallible is the manifestation of the Divine epithets. If a seeker of truth cannot enter the arena of God's epithets, how can he ever recognize the manifestations of these epithets? One who desires to

1- *Qur'an 28: 5.*
2- **Jami' al-Asrar wa Manba' al-Anwar**, al-Thalith, al-Qa'idah al-Thania, p.437.
3- *Qur'an 5: 55.*

observe the Divine epithets in the faces of the Infallibles should be familiar with these epithets and their manifestations in the first place and should be aware of the fact that the deceitful acts of universal arrogant plunderers shall not take away anything from the divine system, nor deduct anything from this Divine Beauty. This is because Divine power is based on knowledge and wisdom and these two are seen in the person of Imam Mahdi (‘a). This is acceptable because Imam Mahdi (‘a), in his theoretical dimension, manifests God’s Knowledge and explains the verse,

﴿إِنِّيٓ أَعۡلَمُ مَا لَا تَعۡلَمُونَ﴾

“*Surely, I know what you do not know.*”[1]

And

﴿وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَدۡ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيۡءٍ عِلۡمَۢا﴾

“*Allah indeed encompasses all things in His knowledge.*”[2]

Imam Mahdi (‘a), in his practical dimension, is the manifestation of God’s practical power:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ ٱللَّهُ لِيُعۡجِزَهُۥ مِن شَيۡءٖ فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَلَا فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِۚ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ عَلِيمٗا قَدِيرٗا﴾

“*And Allah is not such that any thing in the heavens or in the earth should escape Him; surely He is knowing, Powerful.*”[3]

And Imam Mahdi’s (‘a) acts manifest the domination of God’s power over entire galaxies, and reveals the mistakes of the infidels, kafirs (unbelievers) and the arrogant.

1- *Qur’an 2: 30.*
2- *Qur’an 65: 12.*
3- *Qur’an 36: 44.*

﴿وَمَا قَدَرُواْ ٱللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدۡرِهِۦ وَٱلۡأَرۡضُ جَمِيعٗا قَبۡضَتُهُۥ يَوۡمَ ٱلۡقِيَٰمَةِ وَٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتُ مَطۡوِيَّٰتُۢ بِيَمِينِهِۦۚ سُبۡحَٰنَهُۥ وَتَعَٰلَىٰ عَمَّا يُشۡرِكُونَ﴾

"And they have not honored Allah with the honor that is due to Him; and the whole earth shall be in His grip on the day of resurrection and the heavens rolled up in His right hand. Glory be to Him, High, Exalted is He above what they associate with Him."[1]

Imam Mahdi ('a) is a clear manifestation of "and the whole earth shall be in His grip." He dominates the whole universe and man's affairs. This is because He is the soul of all souls and the Heart of all beings. He is not only the heart of the solid things and the plants, of the heavens and the earth; of the seas and the deserts, but of everything and everybody. Man's heart controls his organs; but there is a Heart which controls the human heart. It is a fact that Imam Mahdi ('a) is in full command of any imagination that passes in men's memories. In the same way that he refers to the acts performed by man's hands and eyes and hearts and knows these acts perfectly.It is impossible for the Heart of hearts, i.e. Imam Mahdi ('a), not to know what is going on within us.

When we refer to the expression "the Soul of souls", we do not mean isolated wisdom, erroneously assumed as separate from man. In the same fashion that our hearts are not separate from our sense organs but control them, a Perfect Man controls and dominates us. Based on the verse,

﴿وَقُلِ ٱعۡمَلُواْ فَسَيَرَى ٱللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمۡ وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَٱلۡمُؤۡمِنُونَ﴾

"And say: Work; so Allah will see your work and so will His Apostle and the believers."[2]

God Almighty, His Prophet (s), and Imam Mahdi ('a) have control over anything we do. They are in full command, not only of the function of our bodies, but of our hearts. Unless one becomes the

1- *Qur'an 39:67.*
2- *Qur'an 9: 105.*

Heart of Hearts and sees the light of the Divine epithets, he cannot control the souls of others.

The effects of the men of Insight

Both in seminaries and universities, there are a set of concepts taught, called acquired knowledge. These sciences, even in their most cognitive aspects, i.e. philosophy, do not connect with the outside world, neither can they ever solve a problem, since all of them are theoretical. For this very reason, pragmatically speaking, these trained scholars are helpless. Most of them fall into slips. By themselves, this kind of knowledge has no effect even on their own creators, let alone on others. What has a definite effect on others is the Self of a man of insight. One, whose self has not developed through serving his God, has no effect on others, whatsoever.

The writer of *Awarif* says that a scholar, whose presence does not have any effect, his speech, too, will be useless.[1] Men of insight are the true servants of Allah and their number is extremely small. The Infallible one, Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) is the head of all men of insight. For this reason, when his presence is shown to people their wisdom will be enlightened.

The effect of God’s men, especially of Imam Mahdi (‘a) over people, will be like a magnet or alchemy. This is because a magnet, without movement, attracts iron towards itself. And the alchemist easily changes a worthless substance into a precious piece of stone, by changing its molecular structure altogether.

This magnetic and alchemic effect on people will be evident on the face of Imam Mahdi (‘a). This is because he is allowed, unlike other Imams, to transform the whole universe. For this reason, a short visit by him will create dramatic changes in another’s heart. No body can detract his attention, just as iron cannot resist the attraction of the magnet. He will not speak philosophically, but use the common language of people. However, his talk will have a magnetic effect on people’s hearts.

1- **Awaref al-Ma’aref**, p.74.

Imam Mahdi ('a) the "Guide"

Based on the verse,

﴿وَجَعَلْنَـٰهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا﴾

"We made them Imams who guided people by Our command."

Prophets and God's men, who through the command of God, have reached a lofty position, are responsible for guiding people's hearts.

The word "amr" has many usages. At times, it denotes "position," and its plural is "umur". At other times, it means "command," and its plural form is "Awamer". Sometimes "Amr' means "creation",[1] and is used as such in many verses of the Holy Qur'an:

﴿إِنَّمَآ أَمْرُهُۥٓ إِذَآ أَرَادَ شَيْـًٔا أَن يَقُولَ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ﴾

"His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it: Be, so it is."[2]

﴿وَمَآ أَمْرُنَآ إِلَّا وَٰحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍۭ بِٱلْبَصَرِ﴾

"And, our command is but one, as the twinkling of an eye."[3]

In this sense, then, "Amr" means spontaneous creation of beings in the world higher than ours and "khalq" or creation is a gradual process in time and place that takes place in nature. "He blessed the earth and made therein its food, in four periods." And since an "Amr" is prior to creation, any possession, besides its natural aspects, has got a Divine source, which provides it with

﴿كُن فَيَكُونُ﴾

"Be, so it is."[4]

1- See **Mufradat**, p.88 "a.m.r".
2- *Qur'an 36: 82.*
3- *Qur'an 54: 50.*
4- *Qur'an 36: 82 and Qur'an 2: 117.*

However, the word “Khalq” includes both meanings:

﴿ٱللَّهُ خَٰلِقُ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖ﴾

“Allah is the Creator of everything.”[1]

And this verse includes both abstract and material, as well as earthly and Divine meanings.

Divine “Amr” manifests itself in two forms: the gradual and usual, and the immediate and unusual, i.e. miracles. In the case of Marium (‘a), God’s Favor was in the form of miracles, and this astonished Zakariya (‘a).

﴿كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيۡهَا زَكَرِيَّا ٱلۡمِحۡرَابَ وَجَدَ عِندَهَا رِزۡقٗاۖ قَالَ يَٰمَرۡيَمُ أَنَّىٰ لَكِ هَٰذَاۖ قَالَتۡ هُوَ مِنۡ عِندِ ٱللَّهِۖ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَرۡزُقُ مَن يَشَآءُ بِغَيۡرِ حِسَابٖ﴾

“Whenever Zakariya entered the sanctuary to see her, he found with her food. He said: ‘O Marium ! whence comes this to you?’ She said: ‘It is from Allah. Surely, Allah gives to whom He pleases without measure.’”

Such a sustenance is a Divine one which takes place under *“Be, so it is.”*

God’s men work on both basis:

﴿يَهۡدُونَ بِأَمۡرِنَا﴾

“The Imam who guided people by Our command.”[2]

And through “Be, so it is.” Solving people’s problems and satisfying people’s needs are among the least that they can do. If one intends to arrive at knowledge from ignorance, or receive justice instead of tyranny, or earn prosperity in place of misery, he should resort to God’s men, especially to Imam Mahdi (‘a) so that through *“Be, so it is”* he could take care of his needs and guide him properly.

1- *Qur’an 39: 62.*
2- *Qur’an 21: 73.*

Imam Mahdi (‘a), the companion of the devotee

A seeker is either well aware of the road and its perils or is entirely unaware of it. An unaware seeker is always in need of a knowledgeable guide who can warn him against the bumps on the road, and against hazards.

Man’s journey and his serving God is not an exception to this rule; Prophets and God’s men, who know this road perfectly well, are there to help men. These ambassadors of God are there to lead people. For this reason, Almighty God reminds His Messenger to be patient with the seekers of truth:

﴿وَٱصۡبِرۡ نَفۡسَكَ مَعَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَدۡعُونَ رَبَّهُم بِٱلۡغَدَوٰةِ وَٱلۡعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجۡهَهُۥ﴾

“And withhold yourself with those who call on their Lord morning and evening for His goodwill; and, let not your eyes pass from them, desiring the beauties of this world’s life.”[1]

This is because if a seeker knows that a kind guide is with him, he will pass the road with no anxiety. However, if the guide does not carry out his responsibility properly, then the seeker is lost for ever.

The content of the above-mentioned verse is always living. It is because this verse refers to the Prophet (s). When that sacred being was living, people made use of both his presence and his Prophet-hood. Now people are using only his Prophet-hood. Even today, if a man performs his prayers on time at dawn and dusk and his work is for God and he is on the right way. He is for God and on the right track, being a companion of both the Messenger of God (s) and the Household (‘a), and Imam Mahdi (‘a).

Although this verse is addressed to the Messenger of God (s), Imam Mahdi (s), too, his heir, could be its addressee. He, too, is a guide for the seekers, walking ahead of them at all times. These seekers, feel confident knowing they have him as their guide. He guides society and helps the seekers of truth. He is the Imam of hearts, as well as the Imam of bodies; he is the Imam of the major wars, as well as minor ones.

1- *Qur’an 18:28.*

The Leader of the Caravan of Love

Man, being a dynamic creature, does not rest motion-less. But any movement needs a mover, a stimulus. The words *jary* and *sabaha*, both meaning “movement” are used in the Qur’an:

﴿وَٱلشَّمۡسُ تَجۡرِى لِمُسۡتَقَرٍّ لَّهَا﴾

“*And the sun runs on to a term appointed for it*”[1]

﴿كُلٌّ فِى فَلَكٍ يَسۡبَحُونَ﴾

“*…each swimming in an orbit*”.”[2]

Concerning the need for a mover in the process of movement, Imam Kazim (‘a) has stated: “There is no moved thing which does not need a mover.”[3] The deeper meaning is applicable both in the material leadership of the community and in its spiritual guidance. Besides ordinary, material affairs, these prayers and other kinds of prayers all have their specific directions. Such movements need a mover. But who is the leader of this spiritual road and internal transformations?

The innocent Imams (‘a), besides the apparent leadership they possess and the management of the country that they are responsible for, have the internal and Divine control over society as well. Although the usurpers took away the apparent leadership from the Infallibles (‘a) and made them stay at home, the divine and true leadership could not be taken from them.

Prayer, if sincerely offered to God, is a noble action, which reaches God and creates a bond between man and his Creator, because prayer is a means of coming closer to God.[4] The same is true regarding fasting, alms, pilgrimage and other acts of worship, and based on the verse,

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1- *Qur’an 36: 38.*
2- *Qur’an 21: 33.*
3- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.125.
4- Ibdi, vol.3, p.265.

﴿إِلَيۡهِ يَصۡعَدُ ٱلۡكَلِمُ ٱلطَّيِّبُ﴾

"To Him do ascend the good words."[1]

This needs a mover and a leader. This means a pious act causes other acts to ascend and a pious leader is needed to lead others. And such a leader should be a perfect man and that is the pious Imam (‘a) of the day. He is the one who guides people in their prayers and who directs people towards prosperity.

Based on this, anybody who performs his prayer on time, his prayer gets attached to the Caravan of prayers that ascend towards God. This is because Imam Mahdi (‘a) always performs his prayers on time. Being the leader of bodies and spirits, Imam Mahdi (‘a) attends the pilgrimage ceremony each year; he specially arrives at Arafat and Mina. This is confirmed by Imam Sadiq (‘a): "People do not see the Imam despite the fact that he is present at the ceremony.'[2] The Imam's (‘a) special deputy, Mohammad Ibn Othman Amri, too, says 'I swear to God, the Imam (‘a) takes part in this ceremony each year. He sees people and knows them but people do not recognize him."[3] A lot of the Imam's (‘a) special students, too, are among the crowd, and know people, thanks to the Imam's (‘a) blessings.

It is worth mentioning that some problems of some pilgrims might, unconsciously, be solved due to the favor of Imam Mahdi (‘a), but it is not that every act of unusual favor which might take place in the land of Mina or Arafat can be attributed to Imam Mahdi (‘a). Some elderly pilgrim might lose track of his tent or be left with no food supplies. He might be helped by some men who are trained in the school of the Infallibles, especially of Imam Mahdi (‘a). This elderly man indirectly has benefited from Imam Mahdi's (‘a) Favor.

The fact that being subject to indirect favor of Imam Mahdi (‘a) needs specific qualifications. Thus, only a few are given the honor of visiting him. Others can, through the trained ones of his school, benefit from the favor of Imam Mahdi (‘a).

1- *Qur'an 35: 10.*
2- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.338.
3- **Man La Yahduruh al-Faqih,** vol.2, p. 520.

The mirror of affection and anger

God possesses both Mercy and Wrath, but His Mercy is greater than his Wrath. ‘You are the one whose Mercy dominates His wrath”,[1]or “O, the One, whose affection dominates his anger.’[2] A perfect man, such as the Prophet of Islam (s), is the manifestation of three epithets of God. Firstly, he is the manifestation of God’s blessing,

﴿وَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَٰكَ إِلَّا رَحۡمَةٗ لِّلۡعَٰلَمِينَ﴾

“We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds.”[3]

Secondly, he is the manifestation of God’s specific mercy,

﴿بِٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ رَءُوفٞ رَّحِيمٞ﴾

“Towards the believers, he is compassionate, merciful.”[4]

Thirdly, he is the manifestation of God’s wrath

﴿مُّحَمَّدٞ رَّسُولُ ٱللَّهِۚ وَٱلَّذِينَ مَعَهُۥٓ أَشِدَّآءُ عَلَى ٱلۡكُفَّارِ رُحَمَآءُ بَيۡنَهُمۡ﴾

“Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah, and those with him are firm of heart against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves.”[5]

The Last of Imams, Imam Mahdi (‘a), too, possesses the same traits. He will make use of them in his universal government and leadership. Thus, he is a perfect mirror of affection and wrath in all three dimensions.

Imam Mahdi (‘a) the initiator of implementation of God’s religion

There is no doubt concerning the blessed reappearance of Imam Mahdi (‘a) and the whole world is waiting to see him. But one meaning of his appearance is victory in the same way that “Amrullah’

1- **Sahifah Sajjadiyyah,** p.87; the supplication No.16.
2- **Iqbal al-A‘mal,** p.362
3- *Qur’an 21: 107*
4- *Qur’an 9: 128.*
5- *Qur’an 48: 29.*

is God's religion. The ultimate motive for the Prophet hood of all Prophets is the victory of God's religion over all other schools,

﴿لِيُظْهِرَهُۥ عَلَى ٱلدِّينِ كُلِّهِۦ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ ٱلْمُشْرِكُونَ﴾

"*That He might cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists may be averse.*"[1]

The realization of such an objective is based on the leadership of the perfect and infallible Imams, such as that of Imam Mahdi ('a). This is because God has specially confirmed him. Due to the background that the previous Imams ('a) have set,[2] and people's rational thinking and feelings for justice, he will succeed in implementing God's religion in the same way that, for a limited period of time the true believers of Jesus Christ ('a) had their victory over the infidels.

﴿فَأَيَّدْنَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ عَلَىٰ عَدُوِّهِمْ فَأَصْبَحُواْ ظَٰهِرِينَ﴾

"*Then We aided those who believed against their enemy, and they became uppermost.*"[3]

The main factor for such a victory is Imam Mahdi ('a), who will bring forth justice for the whole world.

The similarities between Imam Mahdi ('a) and Moses ('a)

The following verse

﴿وَنُرِيدُ أَن نَّمُنَّ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ ٱسْتُضْعِفُواْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ ٱلْوَٰرِثِينَ﴾

"*And We desired to bestow a favor upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the Imams, and to make them heirs.*"[4]

1- *Qur'an 9: 33 and Qur'an 61: 9.*
2- **Al-Balad al-Amin**, p.298; **Man La Yahduruh al-Faqih,** vol.2, p.609.
3- *Qur'an 61:14.*
4- *Qur'an 28: 5.*

Which was recited by Imam Mahdi (‘a) at the moment of his birth, can be taken as a blueprint for his corrective plans.

The message of this Qur’anic verse is that Almighty God wants to save the weak from the claws of the oppressors and make them the heirs on the earth and to provide them with justice, and in this way, to annihilate for ever the arrogant from the surface of the earth. Besides, his schedule would not include the recitation of religious commands; rather, his schedule, like that of Moses (s), will be to struggle against the oppressor. Imam Mahdi (‘a) and Moses (‘a) are very similar in their birth and rising.

Some men of insight state that Pharaoh killed all the new-born children of Bani-Israel for fear that one of them will be Moses (‘a). Thus, despite the victory of Moses (‘a) in the final analysis, and in spite of the fact that Pharaoh’s people were all drowned:

﴿فَأَخَذْنَٰهُ وَجُنُودَهُۥ فَنَبَذْنَٰهُمْ فِى ٱلْيَمِّ﴾

“So We caught hold of him and his hosts, then We cast them into the sea.”[1]

This victory was not free of charge. Next to the opportunists and Bani Israel’s excuses, there were great men and women, whose perseverance, patience and sacrifices made the appearance of Moses (‘a) possible.

Hundreds of thousand children were beheaded, before Moses was safely born!

In the same way, Imam Mahdi (s), too, like Moses (s) will break the backbone of all the arrogant and cruel, and the world community will see the light of justice in the face of Mahdi (‘a).

The secrets behind calling Imam Mahdi (‘a) the Qa’im

Hojjat Ibn al-Hasan (s) has numerous names and epithets, each of which describes one of his dimensions. Among his well-known titles is *Qa’im*. There are several reasons for doing so, some of which are referred to here:

1- *Qur’an 28: 40.*

1 Imam Baqir (‘a) was asked: ‘Aren’t you all based (Qa’im) on truth? He replied: ‘Yes.’ Then he was asked: ‘Why is it that only the twelfth of you is called *Qa’im*?’ He replied: ‘When our great grand-father, Husayn (‘a) was martyred, the angels, weepingly said: ‘God, our Lord, can’t you see what they are doing to your select servant?’ Then God revealed to them: ‘O My angels, Be quiet. I swear by My dignity that I will avenge it. Then God drew the curtain aside, showing the Imams after Husayn (‘a). One of them was standing, praying. Then God told the angels: I will avenge them through this standing man.”[1]

2 Due to his prolonged absence, he is forgotten by many. Then he will appear after this prolonged absence.[2]

3 He is called *Qa’im* because his rightful uprising will have some specific features compared to those of the other Imams and God’s men. Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) is called *Qa’im* because he will rise to establish righteousness.

Concerning Imam Mahdi’s uprising (‘a), there are numerous narrations. One of them is related to his Holiness Abdul Azim Hasani (‘a), who says when he asked Imam Jawad (‘a) why he did not become the *Qa’im* of Ale-Mohammad to spread justice, he answered: “All of us are *Qa’im* and guides to Allah’s religion. But I am not that *Qa’im* through which Allah’s will annihilate Kufr and blasphemy and spread justice. That *Qa’im* is the one whose birth is hidden from people. He carries the same epithet as the Messenger of Allah (s).” Regarding this, God says:

﴿أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُواْ يَأْتِ بِكُمُ ٱللَّهُ جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾

“Wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together, surely Allah has power over all things.”[3]

His Holiness Abdul Azim says; Imam Jawad (‘a) then explained: “Our *Qa’im* is Mahdi (‘a) who will definitely live concealed, and we

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1- **‘Ilal al-Shara’i‘,** vol.1, pp.191-192; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.45, p.221 and vol.51, pp.28-29.
2- **Kamal al-Din,** vol.2, p.50; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.51, p.30.
3- *Qur’an 2:148.*

should wait for his appearance. After his appearance, we should obey him.”’[1]

This title applies only to Imam Hadi (‘a), although rising for justice is among the general conditions for being an Imam: “I swear by my own name that the Imam will be the one who basis his judgment on the Qur’an and will rise to establish justice.”[2] These are those Imams who will establish God’s religion.[3] But the honorary title of *Qa’im* is among the Imam’s (‘a) special epithets, “In fact, he is the Promised Existent.”[4] Then the announcer will announce the Imam’s name as the *Qa’im*, which will be heard from the East to the West; and this announcer will be Gabriel.[5] Only that Imam will be called the *Qa’im of the Household.* “I wish I could see the *Qa’im of the Household.*[6] The Messenger (s) and Imam Ali (‘a) and Imam Mahdi (‘a), who is the *Qa’im*, all belong to us.”[7] It has become a good custom that people rise when Imam Mahdi’s (‘a) name is mentioned.

Why Imam Mahdi (‘a) is called Baqiyyatullah?

The title *Baqiyyatullah,* (remnants with Allah), is used in the Holy Qur’an.[8] This Qur’anic epithet has got several features. In the Qur’anic culture nothing remains except for those things which have Divine features. The only thing which remains is the one which has a close bond with Almighty God.

﴿كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ﴾

“Everything is perishable but He.”[9]

The pronoun *Wajheh* refers to God, Who is nearest to everything. Everything has two aspects: (1) personal aspect, which is perishable;

1- **Kamal al-Din,** vol.2, p.49.
2- **Al-Irshad,** vol.2, p.39.
3- **Al-Ghaibah,** Nu’mani, p.86; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.36, p.393.
4- **Al-Ghaibah,** Nu’mani, p.320; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.52, p.366.
5- **Al-Ghaibah**, Tusi, vol.2, p.454; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.52, p.290.
6- **Al-Mahasin**, vol.1, p.287; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.52, p.126.
7- Kifayat al-Athar p.298; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.46, p.202.
8- *Qur’an 11:86.*
9- *Qur’an 28:88.*

(2) Divine aspect, a Divine bond with the origin; in this case it is one of the signs of God, which is unchangeable.

The Divine aspect is eternal; it is based on knowledge and justice. This means that one who is a monotheist and a true believer, and who carries out his religious tasks properly, is a just learned man, who is sharing an "aspect of God," and in the Qur'anic interpretation, he is among those who are eternal, among those

﴿أُوْلُواْ بَقِيَّةٍ﴾

"Who possess understanding."[1]

Accordingly, since Imam Mahdi ('a) is God's reserve meant to correct all human societies, he is "God's remnant." All Infallibles, from the Prophet (s) to Imam Mahdi ('a), are God's remnants, and are eternal in the world of truth to educate people. They are the manifestations of divine scholars, and in Imam Ali's ('a) interpretation, "They are ever-lasting as far as the word exists."[2] The learned live for ever; they die but are not considered as dead; they might be forgotten, but they live for ever.[3] Thus, they are living even if they are apparently dead. On the other hand, there are those who are dead, even before they actually die. Regarding this, Imam Ali (s) says: "These are the dead among the living."[4]

The prayer for Imam Mahdi ('a), a statement of monotheism

Prayers are ladders, which help one ascend to the position of worship. The Imams ('a) established them as necessary. Numerous prayers reported from the Prophet (s) and Imams ('a), besides being acts of worship, are precious lessons in God's Knowledge.

One of the most precious of these optional prayers is the prayer of Imam Mahdi ('a). It is a statement of monotheism.

1- *Qur'an 11:116.*
2- **Nahjul-Balagha,** Hekmat 147.
3- Ibid, Sermon No.87.
4- **Nahjul-Balagha,** Sermon 87.

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

“Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help.”[1]

Is repeated one hundred times. This contains a profound secret. A worshipper who repeats “monotheism” one hundred times will reach true monotheism.

Each one of these monotheistic expressions is repeated one hundred times in each rak‘ah, or two hundred times in all. Then such a person is commanded to perform the supplication after this prayer and repeat “Ya Mohammad Ya Ali, Ya Ali Ya Mohammad, you will suffice us.”[2] This command teaches us that every act should be based on monotheism, and then the means are taken care of. This prayer does not teach us that the Infallibles by themselves are sufficient or that they are equal to God. Rather, a person, who repeats the monotheism two hundred times, and then refers to the Imams, saying, you are the delegates of God, he has internally undergone a great change.

1- *Qur’an 1: 5.*
2- **Al-Mesbah fi al-Ad‘iyah**, p.235; **Jamal al-Usbu‘**, p.280.

CHAPTER THREE
PERSONAL MAHDAWIYYAT
MAHDI, THE PROMISED EXISTENT

The Last Prophet (s) declared that the number of the infallible Imams and his genuine successors was twelve.[1] Their names and traits were well known as spelt out by him. History reveals that eleven of them were martyred, either by poison, or the sword. The twelfth Imam is born and living and he shall appear when God will decide so. This is a fact, contrary to the erroneous assumption that he is not yet born or that he is dead. This is because the first false assumption will lead us to perdition and the second one to confusion. The first assumption is the enemy's fabrication and the second one, the traitor's. The enemies of Islam make use of these two fabrications when they think it is proper to do so. Perhaps the old, spiteful enemy of Islam, i.e., the racist Jews, are behind such plots who, according to the Holy Qur'an, conspire against Muslems:

﴿وَلَا تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَىٰ خَآئِنَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلاً مِّنْهُمْ﴾

"*And you shall always discover treachery in them excepting a few of them.*"[2]

The inability of the Qushchi to comprehend the "Promised Existent"

The concept of "the Promised Existent,' who is unseen yet, is a hard and challenging concept, incomprehensible for most people, but the men of insight. This provides the grounds for some doubts. This doubt resembles the skepticism of the Qushchi shown to Khaja Tusi. He said to Khaja: "You have told us that anyone who believes in Imam Mahdi's existence and in his appearance would live prosperously. But what is wrong if we do not believe in Imam Mahdi's existence and that God would create him when He thinks

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1- See **al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.529; **Al-Khisal,** p.477.
2- *Qur'an 5: 13.*

proper? Under such conditions he would possess all the traits that you ascribe to Imam Mahdi. With this thought we would not need to assume an Imam who is not yet born and present.”[1]

The answer is that the Imam is not created for the sole purpose of leading the human race. Rather, he possesses other traits and features, such as the following:

﴿قَالَ يَٰٓـَٔادَمُ أَنۢبِئۡهُم بِأَسۡمَآئِهِمۡ﴾

“*O Adam: inform them of their names.*”[2]

﴿يُمۡسِكُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضَ﴾

“*Surely Allah upholds the heavens and the earth.*”[3]

Imam Ali (‘a), in the Kumayl supplication, states: “O God, I swear to your epithets which have filled every corner of the universe.”[4] Likewise, the twelfth Imam, in his special prayer, which is performed in the month of Rajab, describes perfect men of the genre Taha and Yasin, in the following words: “The heavens and the earth exist only because of the blessing of the Imams,”[5] because they are the manifestation of God’s epithets.

If the Qushchi had known or believed that the origin of the whole universe rests on the blessings of the Imams, he would not have raised such doubts. It is thus evident that the Qushchi problem lies in his ignorance of the only reason for the existence of the whole universe is the presence of this Promised existent and not the un-born Imams.

Professor Henry Karben’s statement concerning the life of Shiism

Among all religions of Islam only the Shiites believe in Imam Mahdi (‘a). This very belief has caused the dynamism of Shiism.

1- Refer to the account of the Qushchi, 25 x 25, p.474.
2- *Qur’an 2: 33.*
3- *Qur’an 35: 41.*
4- **Al-Balad al-Amin**, p.188.
5- **Mesbahul Mutahjjid**, p.740, **Iqbal al-A‘mal,** p.145.

Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammad Husayn Tabtabaee reports the following statement from Professor Henry Karben: "When I was offering a lecture at Sorbon University in France, concerning religion in general, I said that it is only Shiism which presents a vital doctrine. The Shiites believe that the bond between man and God is everlasting and that there is always an Imam present who is a bond between man and God and that such an Imam is always living." Ayatollah Tabataba'i adds that the world is waiting for the justice that this Savior of the universe will present in the future. This topic fascinated the audience.

Imam Mahdi ('a), the Perfect Man, God's Delegate on earth

The perfect Man is God's vice-regent on earth. For this reason one of man's title is "God's representative," (Caliph of God). This word comes from succession. Based on this assumption, a *Caliph* is always present. The successor of such a *Caliph* is also present.

The Perfect Man is mentioned by God in the Qur'an:

﴿إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً﴾

"I am going to place in the earth a Caliph."[1]

Besides, the pilgrims of the sacred Infallibles address them thus: "Peace be on you, God's caliphs."[2] There is yet another meaning of the word *caliph*, the Perfect Man. He is the manifestation of God's epithets and a reflection of God in every domain:

﴿هُوَ ٱلْأَوَّلُ وَٱلْآخِرُ وَٱلظَّاهِرُ وَٱلْبَاطِنُ﴾

"He is the first and the Last and the Ascendant over all."[3]

﴿وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ﴾

"He is with you wherever you are."[4]

1- *Qur'an 2: 30.*
2- **Al-Balad al-Amin**, p.284; **Al-Kafi,** vol.4, p.570.
3- *Qur'an 57: 3.*
4- *Qur'an 57: 4.*

It is said about an Infallible that, ‘there is no difference between you and them except for worship.”[1] Such a perfect man is sometimes God’s Messenger and sometimes the Prophet’s Successor.

Recognizing the Qur’an and the Perfect Man simultaneously

The best introducer of the Qur’an is the Perfect Man, and the sublime introducer of the perfect Man is the Holy Qur’an. Anyone who wishes to know the Qur’an in the best possible way, has to resort to the Perfect Man and learn Qur’anic facts through him. The Qur’an, on the other hand, can help one recognise the Perfect Man.

On the twenty first of the month of fasting (Ramadhan) at the Kufa Mosque, Imam Hasan (‘a), while referring to the position of *Thaqalayn*, stated: “One of the two *Thaqalayn* is the Prophet (s) and his Household (‘a); and the other one is the Qur’an, from which every judgment can be taken. There is no fault in the Qur’an, neither now, nor will be in the future.”[2]

The Prophet’s Household (‘a) are remnants of the Prophet (s) and God’s rope, resorting to which earns one salvation. The Holy Qur’an is also God’s rope, one end of which is accessible to man, who through recitation, learning wisdom and purifying, can get hold of it; the other end of this Divine rope is in the hands of God. The Prophet’s (s) Household and the Qur’an are the same in significance. In a supplication, Imam Mahdi (‘a) is depicted as a chain between the earth and Heaven.[3] If looked at their Divine perspective, these sacred beings are likened to God’s rope.

It is worth mentioning that the Holy Qur’an has different aspects: some sections deal with morphology, words and lexical items; other sections deal with meanings; some deal with interpretation and still others deal with Divine knowledge. The higher part of the Qur’an deals with Allah and the lower part with its readers.

1- **Mesbahul Mutahjjid**, p.740; **Iqbal al-A‘mal**, p.145.
2- **Manaqib Ali-ibn-Abi-Talib**, vol.4, p.74 and **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.44, p.205; Shaykh Mufid and Shaykh Tusi, report from Imam Hassan (‘a); **Al-Amali,** Mufid p.338; **Al-Amali,** Tusi, p.121.
3- **Iqbal al-A‘mal**, p.606.

The same is true of the Perfect Man: He has the biological aspect and the spiritual aspect. The angels are in his presence; he has a Divine nature, in his presence are wise men; he also is an absolute *caliph*, and being in God's presence, he is absent for the time being.

The features of the Perfect Man

The features of the Perfect Man can be identified by contemplating on the verse;

﴿وَعَلَّمَ ءَادَمَ ٱلْأَسْمَآءَ كُلَّهَا﴾

"And He taught Adam all the names."[1]

﴿ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ﴾

"…and to teach them the Book and wisdom…".[2]

Such a Perfect Man is the instructor of society and responsible for

﴿يَٰٓـَٔادَمُ أَنۢبِئْهُم بِأَسْمَآئِهِمْ﴾

"O Adam, inform them of their names."[3]

Thus, the angels receive instructions from the Perfect Man in the management of their affairs.

This is the lofty position of the Perfect Man who, whether he is hidden or seen, is the channel of God's blessings to man and always has an eye on people and everybody enjoys his very being and he, in his turn, satisfies people's needs through his supplications.

Two pivotal features of such a sacred being will be explained here:

1 **Knowledge:** In a situation where others impose their opinions on the Qur'an and interpret the Qur'anic verses in accordance with their whims and desires, Imam Mahdi ('a) does not impose his

1- *Qur'an 2: 31.*
2- *Qur'an 3: 164.*
3- *Qur'an 2: 33.*

own opinion on the Qur’an; rather, he waits to see whether the Qur’an accepts his opinion or rejects it.[1]

2 **Practice:** In practice, when some people impose their whims, desires, and wants over the Qur’an, Imam Mahdi (‘a), upon his reappearance, will make wisdom lead his desires and make desires obey his leadership.[2]

The unity of the perfect man in the eyes of the Qur’an

In the Holy Qur’an, God speaks of numerous Prophets and their many Books as if there was only one Prophet and only one Book for them all. God talks as if all Prophets and Imams, from Adam to Imam Mahdi (‘a), were only one Perfect Man, who in different eras had a special program to lead others. Based on this, every Prophet confirmed his previous predecessors.

Almighty God, in His Qur’an, reckons the denial of any Prophet as the denial of all Prophets, and this is further evidence of the unity of the Perfect Man in the eyes of the Holy Qur’an. The Qur’an calls the People of Hijr the refuters of all Prophets even when they had denied only one Prophet:

﴿وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلْحِجْرِ ٱلْمُرْسَلِينَ﴾

“And the dwellers of the Rock certainly rejected the Messengers.”[3]

Regarding the dwellers of the thicket, who denied the Prophet Jacob (‘a), the Holy Qur’an states:

﴿كَذَّبَ أَصْحَٰبُ لْـَٔيْكَةِ ٱلْمُرْسَلِينَ﴾

“The dwellers of the thicket gave the lie to the Apostles.”[4]

The Qur’an also says:

1- **Nahjul-Balagha,** Sermon 138.
2- **Nahjul-Balagha,** Sermon 138.
3- *Qur’an 15: 80.*
4- *Qur’an 26: 176.*

﴿وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ لَّمَّا كَذَّبُواْ ٱلرُّسُلَ﴾

"And the people ofMufid, when they rejected the Apostles."[1]

The Qur'an calls any nation who had refuted even one Prophet the refuters of all Prophets:

﴿كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَعَادٌ وَفِرْعَوْنُ ذُو ٱلْأَوْتَادِ ﴿١٢﴾ وَثَمُودُ وَقَوْمُ لُوطٍ وَأَصْحَٰبُ لْـَٔيْكَةِ ۚ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ ٱلْأَحْزَابُ ﴿١٣﴾ إِن كُلٌّ إِلَّا كَذَّبَ ٱلرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ عِقَابِ﴾

*"The people ofMufid and Ad, and Pharaoh, the Lord of spikes, rejected Apostles before them * And Thamud and the people of Lot and the dwellers of the thicket; these were the parties * There was none of them but called the Apostles liars, so, just was My retribution."*[2]

﴿كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَأَصْحَٰبُ ٱلرَّسِّ وَثَمُودُ ﴿١٢﴾ وَعَادٌ وَفِرْعَوْنُ وَإِخْوَٰنُ لُوطٍ ﴿١٣﴾ وَأَصْحَٰبُ ٱلْأَيْكَةِ وَقَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ ۚ كُلٌّ كَذَّبَ ٱلرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ وَعِيدِ﴾

*"Others before them rejected Prophets: the people ofMufid and the dwellers of Ar-Rass and Thamud * and Ad and Pharaoh and Lot's brethren * and the dwellers of the grove and the people of Tubba; all rejected the Apostles, so My threat came to pass."*[3]

Thus, since the rejection of one Prophet equals the rejection of all Prophets, all Apostles of God act as one Messenger of God, who with different approaches, strives to lead the community in a unique way.

1- *Qur'an 25: 37; Qur'an 26: 105.*
2- *Qur'an 38: 12-14.*
3- *Qur'an 50: 12-14.*

The Perfect Man’s humility vis-à-vis God’s Determination

The Glorious Qur’an receives its vigor from Divine knowledge; it is such a great Book that even mountains cannot challenge its greatness:

﴿لَوۡ أَنزَلۡنَا هَٰذَا ٱلۡقُرۡءَانَ عَلَىٰ جَبَلٖ لَّرَأَيۡتَهُۥ خَٰشِعٗا مُّتَصَدِّعٗا مِّنۡ خَشۡيَةِ ٱللَّهِ﴾

“Had We sent down this Qur’an on a mountain, you would certainly have seen it falling down, splitting asunder because of the fear of Allah.”[1]

Only one who can tolerate such grandeur is the Perfect Man, who is stronger than mountains, the sky, the earth and the like and vis-à-vis truth, is humbler than all other men. This happened when Abraham (‘a) was being thrown into the fire,

﴿قَالُواْ حَرِّقُوهُ وَٱنصُرُوٓاْ ءَالِهَتَكُمۡ﴾

“(They said): Burn him and help your gods.”[2]

He humbly yielded to God’s Will, stood firm against atheism and succumbed to the flames of the fire.

Today, there is no such Infallible or Perfect Man, except for Imam Mahdi (‘a), who is the manifestation of God’s Great Name. He is the one who’s long, benefactive life neither hurts his sacred life, nor his absence subtract his knowledge of human society. This is because the Imam Mahdi (‘a) is the absolute Divine *caliph*, and like Adam (‘a) and other God’s *caliphs*, is the teacher of angels.

Knowing Imam Mahdi (‘a) is Knowing God’s Caliphate

Imam Mahdi (‘a) can be known only when the true meaning of *God’s caliphate* is understood. It is because *God’s caliph* is the best title for the Perfect Man. We have already said that if a person is not available for a job, his substitute is regarded as his caliph; but there is no caliph for a being who is present everywhere. God’s reference to the Perfect

1- *Qur’an 59: 21.*
2- *Qur’an 21: 68.*

Man as a *caliph* makes it clear that the Perfect Man has a lofty position; he could be the manifestation of all God's Names.

The Perfect Man, who is the manifestation of

﴿ٱلۡأَوَّلُ وَٱلۡأٓخِرُ وَٱلظَّٰهِرُ وَٱلۡبَاطِنُ﴾

"He is the First and the Last and the Ascendant over all and the Knower of Hidden things."[1]
And

﴿وَهُوَ مَعَكُمۡ أَيۡنَ مَا كُنتُمۡ﴾

"He is with you wherever you are."[2]

Deserves to be *God's caliph* and the truth of such a man is only recognized by his Creator and by other perfect men. Such a being is sometimes the Prophet and at times an Imam.

God's caliph only fits the Divine body of the Perfect Man; even the closest angels lack such a blessing. This is because, based on

﴿وَمَا مِنَّآ إِلَّا لَهُۥ مَقَامٞ مَّعۡلُومٞ﴾

"And there is none of us but has an assigned place."[3]

Angels do not fit in with,

﴿بِكُلِّ شَيۡءٖ مُّحِيطًا﴾

"Allah encompasses all things."[4]

﴿عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖ شَهِيدًا﴾

"Surely Allah is a witness over all things."[5]

1- *Qur'an 57: 3.*
2- *Qur'an 57: 4.*
3- *Qur'an 37: 164.*
4- *Qur'an 4: 126.*
5- *Qur'an 4: 33.*

It is only the Perfect Man, who is the manifestation of God everywhere.

With His Greetings, which are offered with different expressions, God attracts our attention towards the Perfect Man:

﴿سَلَٰمٌ عَلَىٰ نُوحٍ فِي ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ﴾

“Peace and salutation toMufid among the nations.”[1]

And at times, God extends this universal greeting. An example is His statement concerning The Propets John and Christ (s):

﴿وَٱلسَّلَٰمُ عَلَيَّ يَوۡمَ وُلِدتُّ وَيَوۡمَ أَمُوتُ وَيَوۡمَ أُبۡعَثُ حَيًّا﴾

“And peace on him on the day he was born, and on the day he dies, and on the day he is raised to life.”[2]

At times, this sort of salutation, special for prophets, is heard in the supplications for the Infallible Imams (‘a). An example is the supplication of *Ale-Yasin*. In this supplication, we tell Imam Mahdi (‘a): “Peace be upon you and upon your teaching and upon your purifying and upon your rising and upon your days and nights and upon your positions because you are God’s caliph and you deserve all greetings such as greetings to John and Isa (‘a).3

Imam Mahdi (‘a), the Perfect Man for all times

The Perfect Man is the center of God’s Blessings and it is because of him that all creatures, from angels to the Jinn and human beings and other creatures receive God’s blessings.[4]

Today, all across the entire universe, there is no Perfect Man except Imam Mahdi (‘a). It is worth mentioning that when the title *Caliph on earth*[5] is used for the Perfect Men, especially the Infallibles, the

1- *Qur’an 37: 79.*
2- *Qur’an 19: 33.*
3- **Al-Ihtijaj,** vol.2, pp.592-593.
4- **Mafatih al-Jenan,** the Adilah supplication.
5- **Tafsir al-‘Ayyashi**, vol.1, p.308.

caliphate is not exclusive to the earth; rather, their caliphate extends, by God's permission, to the galaxies.

Imam al-Asr [Imam Mahdi (s)] is the truth of "elixir"

Imam Mahdi (s) is the perfect man of our time and the very being of the perfect man since he is the manifestation of God's great Names he possesses all perfect virtues. For this reason, the Infallible Imam is the source of "the water of life":

﴿ٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحۡيِ ٱلۡأَرۡضَ بَعۡدَ مَوۡتِهَا﴾

"Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its death."[1]

God would give life to the earth after its death and life rests on water:

﴿وَجَعَلۡنَا مِنَ ٱلۡمَآءِ كُلَّ شَيۡءٍ حَيٍّ﴾

"And We have made of water everything living."[2]

And Imam Mahdi ('a) is the limpid water which waters the Lands of hearts.

"Water of life" is a truth which is put in the frame of a Perfect man at the moment of its creation. Qur'an recognizes the God's religion as the spring of life and concerning its life-giving characteristic states:

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱسۡتَجِيبُواْ لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمۡ لِمَا يُحۡيِيكُمۡ﴾

"O you who believe! Answer the call of Allah and His Apostle when he calls you to that which gives you life."[3]

This means the result of belief in religion is not opium or drugs; rather, such a belief ends in motivation to live and it is source of dynamism.

The issue of giving life to earth after its death has been confirmed by the narrations ascribed to the Infallible. It is narrated from Imam Ja'far al-

1- *Qur'an 57: 17.*
2- *Qur'an 21: 30.*
3- *Qur'an 8: 24.*

Sadiq (‘a): “God will make the earth alive after its death is caused by blasphemy.[1] Sometimes a society dies; sometimes hearts die, and sometimes the cultural aspects of a community die. Wherever there is an atmosphere suitable for ignorance to prevail, death finds a chance to dominate. Such an environment improves if directions are given in time. However, at times this lack of dynamism might be so strong as to need the life-giving approach of the Imam of that era. And it can be nobody except Imam Mahdi (‘a) who can do it.

Imam Mahdi (‘a) is the very basis of human life

Restoring life to the community is exclusively in the hands of Imam Mahdi (‘a). and the secret of this life-giving trait lies in the fact that others might be knowledgeable but lack justice or the other way round. At times, all might be both knowledgeable and just. However, they might not have reached the optimal levels of knowledge and justice. Such individuals are proper human-beings who can save themselves and they might have the power to heal other sick ones. But concerning the Perfect Man, since his knowledge and justice are perfect he is the true manifestation of God’s Lofty Names; he possesses all God’s Blessings. In this way, such men are the “water of life.”

In order for a seed to grow, several factors cooperate: factors such as water, light and minerals. Water by itself, even if limpid and full of minerals, is not sufficient. However, the “water of life” by itself is sufficient for growth. Wilayah and Imamate represent the water of life. The perfect knowledge and practice of Imam Mahdi (‘a) constitute “the water of life.” Thus, he will enliven the dead hearts by his reappearance. Imam Mahdi (s), as a delegate of God, can enliven dead hearts; however, man has got to expose his heart to him to heal. In this way, men can benefit from his limpid “water of life.”

The result of obeying the Perfect Man is a comfortable life

Living a happy and easy life is everyman’s desire. However, human beings just do not know where to get such a life. To attain such an easy life could be through the guidance of Imam Mahdi (‘a), who is the possessor of the known and unknown of the universe. A

1- **Kamal al-Din,** vol.2, p.385.

community can attain prosperity by obeying him. They would learn that in order to live happily they should lead a simple life and set luxuries aside. They should raise the horizon of their thinking so that they can understand that there is nothing more valuable than human life.

The oppressed believers at the dawn of Islam were told by God that they could enjoy a pure life through their right deeds. The asset of freedom is healthy actions, and knowing how to live a simple life is an important aspect of a happy life. Imam Ali (s) states: "Contentment is kingship and good-temper, a blessing."[1]

Summing up, an ignorant community abandons something which is the source of its comfort and amasses something that causes its discomfort. This is the cause of its anxiety. Such a society is trapped between two traps and teaching them how to free themselves from these traps

﴿وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَٱلْأَغْلَٰلَ ٱلَّتِى كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

"And remove from them their burden and the shackles which were upon them."[2]

Can be carried out by both the Prophet (s) and Imam ('a).

1- **Nahjul-Balagha,** Hikmah 229.
2- *Qur'an 7: 157.*

SECTION TWO
WAITING FOR

CHAPTER ONE
THE ABSOLUTE OR RELATIVE NATURE OF IMAM MAHDI'S ('A) ABSENCE

The sacred name of Imam Mahdi ('a) (the Promised Existent) always entails concepts such as absence or expectation. If these concepts are used properly, they cause the dynamic movement of the Islamic community; if misused, they cause stagnation and disrupt the orders and commands of the Holy Qur'an and the Household ('a). Absence is a concept which, can be developed and bring about a reasonable life.

Absence is of two sorts: absolute and relative. Absolute absence is hidden for everyone; an example is God, whose Essence nobody can grasp; He is absent for everyone, despite the fact that He is always present for Himself.

Relative absence is absence only for some or absence for some periods of time. Some pious men find Judgment Day present even today and some men of God daily encounter angels:

﴿فَأَرْسَلْنَآ إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا﴾

"We sent to her Our spirit, and there appeared to her a well-made man."[1]

Information of the past is an example of absence:

﴿ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَآءِ ٱلْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ﴾

"This is of the announcements related to the unseen which We reveal to you."[2]

By calling Imam Mahdi (s) the Absent, we admit our inability to perceive his sacred being. Thus, it is people who are absent from his presence and not he from us. This absence is called relative.

1- *Qur'an 19: 17.*
2- *Qur'an 3: 44.*

The Wisdom of absence

The rule of the pious over the earth is the irrevocable Promise of God.

﴿وَعَدَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ مِنكُمۡ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ لَيَسۡتَخۡلِفَنَّهُمۡ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ﴾

“*Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them rulers in the earth (as He made rulers those before them).*”[1]

However, the application of such a sacred promise needs certain conditions without which Imam Mahdi’s (‘a) appearance is extremely difficult. Almighty God, through the act of “Be” is able to carry out His wishes: He can send all His Blessings all at once and establish the government of the pious at any time He wishes. But the defects of human beings detracts God’s Blessings. Thus, it is we who are limited, not God.

In the firm belief of the Shiite twelvers there is no doubt whatsoever that this Godly promise will, after a long period of absence, come true. This absence is one of the conditions of this irrevocable Promise. According to the holders of this belief, there is a Divine sublime wisdom behind this absence, which is laying the foundation for the government of the pious.

The aim of discussing the absence of Imam Mahdi (‘a) is not to discover the reasons for his absence; rather, the aim for the expectant believer to understand his duties well during his absence and critically evaluate himself on the performance of his duties.

The reasons for the Imam’s (‘a) absence

1- Threat of killing

Based on some narrations, one of the reasons for the Imam’s (‘a) absence was the threat of being killed. This is confirmed by Imam Sadiq (‘a) who said: “The Messenger of God (s) said: ‘He has to be

1- *Qur’an 24: 55.*

absent.' People asked him for the reason. The Messenger of Allah replied: 'the threat of being killed.'[1]

The fear, which protects one's life and saves him from wasting it for no reason is essential, because one needs to achieve a specific result when he endangers his life. One who sheds his own blood but does not think about the result is bold, not brave. This is because a brave man acts wisely. This is what Imam Ali ('a) did when his life or that of his relatives was in danger: "I looked around and saw no friend or protector, except for my relatives, whom I did not wish to get killed. Thus, I gave up fighting, feeling very bitter. I tried to be patient, feeling extremely dejected."[2]

Imam Ali ('a) showed no sign of fear. Fear could never enter his bravery. How could he ever fear death when he agreed to sleep in the bed of the Messenger of God (s) on the night of Hijrah, being aware that forty armed men were ready to kill anybody who was on that bed. They would kill anybody who was there, thinking it was the Prophet (s). How could Imam Ali ('a) ever fear death when he wrote to Othman Ibn Hanif: "If all the Arab nation intends to fight me, I will never withdraw."[3]

At times, Ali's ('a) attack caused the enemy to scatter and take refuge in mountains, avoiding Ali's ('a) sword. They even said that the angel of death is where Ali ('a) is. The Messenger of God (s), in the war of Khaybar, called him "the aggressor without retreat," and threatened the infidels with Ali's ('a) attack.[4]

Thus, Ali's ('a) reference to fear, as stated in these narrations, is the rational fear, which is identical with bravery, and not based on weakness. Similarly, Imam Mahdi ('a) is absent to avoid being killed prior to the fulfillment of Allah's promise and the Divine religion being annihilated with his martyrdom. This would end the descent of God's assistance to the truly deserving and the promise of the establishment of the government of the good ones would never

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1- **'Ilal al-Shara'i',** vol.1, p.286.
2- **Nahjul-Balagha,** Sermon 217.
3- Op Sit, letter 45: paragraph 19.
4- **Manaqib Ali ibn Abi Talib,** vol.2, pp.98-99; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.41, p.68.

materialize. This kind of fear does not stem from weakness but is bravery in its true sense. This is because Imam Mahdi (‘a) is God’s last *caliph,* and this trait is exclusive to him alone. When other Imams got martyred there was always another Imam to substitute for him. But Imam Mahdi (‘a) is the last sign of God and the last Innocent Imam (‘a).

2- Relief from allegiance with the arrogant

In his letter to Imam Mahdi (‘a), which was delivered to him through his second special deputy, Mohammad Ibn Uthman Umri, Ishaq Ibn Yaaqub asked the Imam (‘a) the reasons for his absence. The Imam explained: “You are asking the reason for my absence. Be aware that God Almighty states:

﴿يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تَسۡـَٔلُواْ عَنۡ أَشۡيَآءَ إِن تُبۡدَ لَكُمۡ تَسُؤۡكُمۡ﴾

“O you who believe! Do not ask questions about things which if answered may trouble you.”[1]

All my grandfathers had to compromise with the Arrogance of the time. However, I shall appear when I do not have any pact of allegiance over my shoulders.’[2]

This narration makes it clear that, when he appears, he shall invite all the arrogance of the time to Islam and if they refuse, he shall fight them and not show any mercy or come to any agreement with them at the cost of breach of any Islamic laws. This kind of relief is one of the blessings of his absence, because none of the Innocent Imams (‘a) was satisfied with his allegiance with the tyrants of the Omayyad, Marwanid, or Abbasid dynasties.

3- The gradual imparting of advantages

Ihe infallible Imam (‘a) is a mediator imparting God’s Blessings to man. This diffusion of blessings depends on special prerequisites, without which, either the recipient of blessings is deprived of them, or

1- *Qur’an 5: 101.*
2- **Kamal al-Din,** vol.2, pp.161-1`62; **Al-Ihtijaj,** vol.2, pp.544-545.

his benefits remain incomplete. This is because the relation of the giver and beneficiary is of three kinds:

- Both the giver and the beneficiary have the ability to give and receive the blessings. One example is the descending of the Holy Qur'an on the sacred night of Qadr over the sacred heart of the Messenger of God (s).
- Neither the giver could offer to the receiver the whole blessing all at once, nor could the receiver receive the blessing all at once. An example is a mother who breast-feeds her child but is unable to provide it with all her milk at once; in the same way, the child is unable to receive all the milk at once, which it is supposed to receive in the coming months. In this case both giving and receiving become gradual.
- The giver is complete in his giving; but the receiver is unable to receive the blessing all at once. An example: a teacher who is an expert in a branch of science, say mathematics, and can teach his students a major formula from which the students can extract minor mathematical rules. Such a teacher is not bound by any rule in his giving. However, his students have not yet reached the stage of extracting minor rules out of general, major principles. Thus they are unable to make use of the teacher's immediate imparting of advantages.

The same concept explained through another example. God Almighty created the universe in one stroke,

﴿وَمَآ أَمۡرُنَآ إِلَّا وَٰحِدَةٞ﴾

"And Our command is but one, as the twinkling of an eye."[1]

Since Nature could not abruptly receive the blessings from the source of Blessings, so He made, therein, its food, in four periods, to give such blessings gradually. Athough the blessings are given abruptly, due to the receiver's defect, they are received gradually.

The reference to the gradual receiving of Blessings is mentioned in the following verse:

1- *Qur'an 54: 50.*

﴿إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ فِى سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ﴾

"Surely your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods of time."[1]

In other similar Qur'anic verses, He indicates that the gradual sending of God's Blessings enable the receiver to receive the Blessings; and the sending of those Blessings on the part of God Almighty does not meet any obstacle.

The gradual receiving of Blessings based on the ability of the receiver, too, is of two kinds: the receiver Lacks the ability to receive the Blessings suddenly, but can gradually receive such Blessings either directly, or through the least amount of means. Examples are the great Prophet's miracles and the extra activities of the great men of God. Another example is the descent of heavenly food for Lady Mary ('a):

﴿كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا ٱلْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِندَهَا رِزْقًا ۖ قَالَ يَـٰمَرْيَمُ أَنَّىٰ لَكِ هَـٰذَا ۖ قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ﴾

"Whenever Zakariya entered the sanctuary to see her, he found with her food. He said[2]*: "O Mary! Whence comes this to you?" She said: "It is from Allah. Surely Allah gives to whom He pleases without measure."*

The phrase "*without measure*" indicates that the descent of God's Blessings takes place differently from what takes place in nature, because natural rules demand that actions should take place via numerous links, while God's Blessings take place with no regard to natural laws or mediators.

Despite the fact that benefiting from the Blessings of the government of the pious is possible without prerequisites, the receivers, lacking the required ability to receive such blessings, cannot benefit from God's Blessings unless the necessary conditions are available. The

1- *Qur'an 7: 54; Qur'an 36: 3.*
2- *Qur'an 3: 37.*

basic prerequisite for the establishment of the government of the pious is preparing people to accept the just universal government. The absence of Imam Mahdi (‘a) continues till these conditions materialize.

Other reasons for the Imam's (‘a) absence

Imam Sadiq (‘a) when asked the reason for the Imam's (‘a) absence, replied "I deem it advisable not to say anything about it. I am not allowed to reveal the reason." When pressed for more elaboration, the Imam (‘a) said: "The same reasons that existed for previous signs of God apply to this case as well, and this unknown reason *(hikmah)* shall never be revealed. This is like the *hikmat* behind the breaking of the ship, the killing of the young man and repairing of the wall by Khidr (‘a), prior to his departure, which did not become evident to Moses.[1]

This absence of the Imam is God's *Hikmah*. While we know that God Almighty is Wise, we accept that His deeds are wise, too, even if we do not understand the *hikmah* behind them.[2]

How to benefit from the Imam's (‘a) absence

Although in some narrations the Innocent Imam (‘a) has been likened to a light for our guidance, this is just a moderate description of his benefits. However, in some other narrations he has been likened to a world –illuminating sun which gives off light to the whole world.[3]

In this narration of the Messenger of God (s), the presence of the Imam (‘a) is likened to the sun and his absence to the sun behind the clouds. Thus his benefits for people are like the benefits of the sun:

1- The Imam (‘a) is the pivot for the system of creation like the sun in the solar system is the pivot for the movement of other planets.[4]

2- The enjoyment of the sun by the creatures of the solar system does not depend on its direct light; rather, gravity, which is the binding

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1- *Qur'an 18: 71-77.*
2- **Kamal al-Din,** vol.2, p.158; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.52, p.91.
3- **Kamal al-Din,** vol.1, p.365; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.52 p.93.
4- **Mafatih al-Jinan,** the Adilah supplication.

source of the solar system; the wind, the rain, the growth of the plants, all are the benefits of the light of the Imam (‘a). The blessings of his existence are much higher than his apparent absence. The stability of the solar system, the management of the world, the giving of sustenance to all creatures, and the guidance of able people, are all signs of the blessings of this sacred being. The curtain of his absence does not deprive people of his blessings just as a sun hidden behind the clouds does not hold back its blessings.

3- When the clouds stand between us and the sun, it does not mean that the sun does not exist; it only means that temporarily we can not see it. We are deprived of the light of the sun for the time being. This is because the sun is too big to be hindered by the clouds or for its benefits to be obliterated in any possible way.

The Perfect Man, the cause for the continuation of the universe is much too great to be barred from giving off blessings. How is it possible for *God’s Caliph* who has the rein of creation in his hands and is aware of the known and unknown, to be hidden?

Neither veil nor screen hath the beauty of the true Beloved

Lay aside the dust of the path so that your glance can see.[1]

1- The clouds hinder the eyes, which look at the sun from the earth, but not the eyes, which look at it from above. Thus, the sacred being of the Imam (‘a) is hidden only from the eyes of those who are earth-bound and stagnate behind worldly possessions. But those who have overcome their worldly desires are in the presence of the Imam (‘a) all the time.

Hafiz, the Iranian poet, says;

How can you, who are nature-bound

Ever pass the way of love?[2]

Sa‘adi, the Iranian poet, says:

Can’t you see that a man can’t see

Through the dust, even if he has eye-sight?[3]

1- **The lyrics of Hafiz**, No.144.
2- **The lyrics of Hafiz**, No.144.
3- **Sa‘adi’s collection of lyrics**, p.291.

Maulavi Rumi, the Iranian mystic poet, says:

If you leave your whims for two steps,

You can step on heaven's territory.[1]

2- The illumination of the sun is ever-lasting and does not have boundaries and any receiver can benefit from the sun in proportion to his abilities. Now, if we put aside all barriers from our way, we can benefit more from this blessing. The sacred being of Imam Mahdi (‘a), like the sun itself, is the source of blessings. Of course, the amount of benefit from this source of blessings depends on our closeness to this sacred being.

3- As the lack of the sun's radiation would lead to darkness and the ice-age and make life impossible, the lack of the Imam's blessings would make life miserable for men. In this regard, Imam Mahdi (‘a) said to Shaykh Mufid: "We are never indifferent to you nor ever forget you; or else your enemies would make you non-existent."[2]

How can I ever tell others,

That my Love is outgoing, but secluded?

Imam Mahdi (‘a) can also be likened to a compass, which shows the direction of all hearts towards himself, so that he can draw all the hearts gone-astray towards himself.

The Necessity of deputation during the Imam's (‘a) absence

Reasons such as societal needs for an agent to bring order to the affairs of Ummah during the absence of Imam (s) are logical. This is because the duration of absence, which might last - God forbid – for another thousand years, should not be an era of confusion and chaos. It could cause most of the commands of religion to be idled. It could become an excuse to negate and obliterate Divine limits. We cannot deny the existence of a just manager, who uses an approach based on the Holy Qur'an and the Infallibles (‘a).

1- **Mawlawi's lyrics**, p.359, No.959.
2- **Al-Ihtijaj,** vol 2, p.598.

In the story of Lot (‘a), God sent a leader to lead that nation even if only the members of one family had accepted Islam, and God was well aware of the fact that the others would not accept God’s religion:

﴿فَأَخۡرَجۡنَا مَن كَانَ فِيهَا مِنَ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ ٣٥ فَمَا وَجَدۡنَا فِيهَا غَيۡرَ بَيۡتٖ مِّنَ ٱلۡمُسۡلِمِينَ﴾

“Then We brought forth such as were therein of the believers. But We did not find therein save a single house of those who submitted.”[1]

Regarding the issue that people’s corruption would not hinder the flow of God’s Blessings and that God continuously appoints religious leaders to guide people, God says:

﴿أَفَنَضۡرِبُ عَنكُمُ ٱلذِّكۡرَ صَفۡحًا أَن كُنتُمۡ قَوۡمٗا مُّسۡرِفِينَ ٥ وَكَمۡ أَرۡسَلۡنَا مِن نَّبِيّٖ فِي ٱلۡأَوَّلِينَ ٦ وَمَا يَأۡتِيهِم مِّن نَّبِيٍّ إِلَّا كَانُواْ بِهِۦ يَسۡتَهۡزِءُونَ﴾

*“What! Shall We then turn away the Reminder from you altogether because you are an extravagant people? * And how many a Prophet have We sent among the ancients? * And there come not to them a Prophet but they mocked at them.”*[2]

Since logical reasons are irrevocable, the deputy of the Imam (‘a) during his absence is necessary. Regarding this issue Tusi has said: “The very essence of Imam Mahdi (‘a) is a favor and his deputation is still another favor.”[3] There is no binding relation between these two favors to the effect, that if the second favor exists, the first favor would necessarily become non-existent. Regarding this, Imam Ali (‘a) supplicates: “My God, do not leave the earth with no deputy; or else people will go astray.”[4]

1- *Qur’an 51:35-36.*
2- *Qur’an 43:5-7.*
3- **Kashf al-Murad**, p.388; **Al-Maslak Fi Usul al-Din**, Muhaqqiq Hilli, p.194 “foot-notes”.
4- **Nahjul-Balagha,** Hekmah 147, Paragraph ll.

His absolute authority is maintained through his deputies. Now, at the time of the Imam's (‘a) absence, we face a lack of his blessings and favors because of the evil in human societies. However, his authority, through his deputies, still exists.

Thus, if a people do not want to help the Imam's (‘a) deputies so that the atrocities of the oppressors and the injustice done to the oppressed[1] be stopped, it is the people's own fault.

It is undoubtedly better to establish an Islamic order through his deputies. Never should an Islamic researcher assume that the commands of Islam can be forgotten, and the well-known jurisprudent, Shaykh Ansari never find a chance to say:

"The reason why Islamic laws can never be stopped is that at the time of the Imam's (‘a) absence the breach of the Islamic code is not allowed. Punishment is not allowed prior to the establishment of enjoying the good and forbidding the evils, and no one is punished with any other means than the approved religious code." This concept can be understood from the wise statement of Sadrul Muta'lihin:

This Divine philosopher speaks of political jurisprudence along with religious jurisprudence, He considers the deputies of the great Prophet of Islam (s) responsible for them, and assigns the deputation of this comprehensive knowledge to the jurisprudents. Similar issues have been offered by Farabi, Avicenna and other philosophers prior to Sadrul Muta'lihin.

To sum up, there are logical reasons for the protecting the position of the deputy of Imam Mahdi (‘a) while he is absent. The results of such argumentation will become clear in the coming discussions.

Deputation during absence

On his journey to Marv, Imam Rida (‘a), among the excited people of Nayshabur, recited the following: "The one who wants to live peacefully both in this world and in the hereafter should live a monotheistic life."[2] Then, a few moments later, he added: "On some

1- Op cit, sermon 3, paragraph 17.
2- **Al-Tawhid,** Saduq, p.25; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (**‘a**),** vol.2, p.145.

conditions, and I am one of those conditions.”[1] For those who have not accepted Imamate, Wilayah and the leadership of the honorable Prophet of Islam (s), the word “monotheism” will be of no use. Only those are under the protection of God, who accept the Imamate of the Household (‘a).

The same statement was offered by Imam Ali (‘a): “The expression, ‘There is no god but Allah,’ which is the basis for entering God’s promised paradise, has some conditions, one of which is the belief in me and my son’s Imamate; the one who does not believe in such a Wilayah, will not be saved.”[2]

We are living in the era of the Wilayah and Imamate of the fourteenth member of the Household of Piety and of the twelfth Imam of the Household.. We are not directly in touch with him. But has the glorifying word of monotheism lost its conditions? Can we say that inspite of the Imam’s (‘a) absence this world will suffice, and we do not need a divine leader who can lead us wisely?

We certainly need a leader to continue the principles of the Imam (‘a) and protect the Ummah. We should ask ourselves what kind of features this deputy of the Imam (‘a) should possess. A just jurisprudent whose jurisprudence is close to the Imam’s (‘a) knowledge and justice, similar to that of the Imam (‘a) is suitable for this position. Such a leader qualifies to continue the principle of monotheism.

It is a fact that the Honorable messenger of God (s) was the first teacher to teach the Holy Qur’an; and the noblest proclaimer of the principle of monotheism. During his honorable lifetime, he tried hard to coordinate the details of people’s everyday affairs with the Holy Qur’an. This formidable job was put on the shoulders of his Household (‘a) upon his demise, and those Infallible Imams (‘a), at different periods of time, different conditions and upheavals in the life of their ummah, strove to familiarize the Muslim communities with the lofty knowledge and culture of the Glorious Qur’an.

1- **Al-Tawhid,** Saduq, p.25; **‘Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, vol.2, p.145.
2- **Sharh Ghurar al-Hikam,** vol.2, p.514.

During the absence of Imam Mahdi (‘a), the students of the school of the Household (‘a), the religious scholars of the rich religious sources tried hard to interpret the Divine verses. The distinguished jurisprudents, with an understanding of the conditions of time and of the innovations of the era, endeavored to extract Islamic commands from those valuable Islamic sources and put them at the disposal of the believers. These continuous efforts have helped the Islamic communities to use the Islamic knowledge and culture, and assisted believers to look forward towards the leadership of the Qur'an and the Household (‘a) during the absence of the Imam (‘a).

The continuous need to apply Islamic rules

With the demise of last Prophet of God (s), the descent of Divine laws ended. Whatever was required for the prosperity of man, was handed down to men though the Holy Qur'an. Only their application in the individual and social life of every Muslim remains to be done.

The unique law of revelation, satisfies the individual and communal needs of the Islamic community. The lack of application of these laws would end in disorder, chaos, slavery, injustice, corruption and misery for Muslims. The period of Imam Mahdi's (‘a) absence is no exception to this state of affairs. On the other hand, there is no doubt that God Almighty will not leave man and society to go astray when skepticism, corruption and ignorance prevail.

Such a mission, the continuation of God's religion, is placed over the shoulders of Imam Mahdi's (‘a) deputies, i.e. the just jurisprudents.[1] These experts of Islam are the ones who, on the one hand, with great efforts try to adjust religious laws to the prevailing conditions; and, on the other hand, try to lead the Islamic community in the right direction by applying those laws.

The cessation of the application of Islamic commands not admissible, during the absence

Some do not accept the wilayah of the deputies of the Imam at the time of the absence and insist that government is only for the Innocent Imam (‘a), and nobody is suitable to be his deputy even if he

1- See **al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.67; **Wasa'il al-Shi'ah,** vol.27, pp.136-140.

is a just jurisprudent. These people do not consider the government of the Innocent ones as one of expansion of territories or of unjust domination. Rather, they perceive his government as the application of Divine commands and the propagation of Divine Instructions.

The cessation of such a government would stop the application of Islamic commands, because many of the Islamic commands cannot be carried out unless there exists an Islamic government under the leadership of the Innocent Imam (‘a) or his special deputies. On the other hand, no secular government is expected to be capable of carrying out such Islamic laws, as for eg., the law of retribution.

We have to either accept the cessation of many Divine commands or accept the fact that the rein of government should be in the hands of Imam’s (‘a) deputies, the just jurisprudents, so that they can manage the Islamic communities with Divine commands.

The competency of Islam to continue up to the Day of Judgment is a proven fact; there is no doubt about it whatsoever.

﴿لَّا يَأۡتِيهِ ٱلۡبَٰطِلُ مِنۢ بَيۡنِ يَدَيۡهِ وَلَا مِنۡ خَلۡفِهِۦ﴾

“False-hood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it.”[1]

The application of the socio-political commands of Islam is absolutely impossible without a qualified jurisprudent and it is logical to assume that God shall not leave the Islamic community with no guardian and with no just jurisprudents as the Imam’s (‘a) deputies.

It is clear to all expert jurisprudents, that a religious and just deputy is necessary for the community. The well-known jurisprudent, Shaykh Mohammad Hasan Najafi, the author of *Jawaher* is a good example of such keen-sighted jurisprudents. In his book, after dealing with the issues of war and enjoining the good and forbidding the evils, he states:

“One of the things which could be understood from the narrations of Shiites even with the slightest amount of attention is the necessity of there being a wali who is well-versed in religion. It would suffice to pay attention to the letter which is sent to Mufid by Imam al-

1- *Qur’an 41: 42.*

Mahdi ('a), praising the position of Wilayah highly,[1] and that if this position is without a Wali, then Muslims' affairs will not be taken care of. The strange thing is that most people doubt this position; they have not yet tasted jurisprudence."[2]

To emphasize this concept, he says those who doubt the jurisprudence issue are unaware of the essence of religion and its commands. He finally states that it is unjust for an all-knowing, comprehensive jurisprudent not to have the right to command a religious war.

If the Divine hudood cannot be executed, most Qur'anic issues will not be dealt with and the interpretation of most Qur'anic verses, and narrations will become difficult. This is because the basis for most judicial issues lies in the Qur'an and the narrations of the Infallibles ('a).

Islamic government essential for the application of the Islamic judicial system

No scientific researcher can ever deny the judicial system of Islam. The judicial issue is profoundly different from the issue of Wilayah. This is because judgment is one of the responsibilities of the Imam's ('a) deputy in which he either directly or indirectly participates. The issue of judgment is applicable in the following ways: Firstly, it is used in the disputes concerning the economic, political, military and social issues, all of which are related to jurisprudence. Secondly, the verdict is meaningless, unless accompanied by the application of the verdict, and thirdly, the carrying out of the verdict, in its broad sense, is not feasible without Wilayah (deputation) and his managerial power. So the judicial system is dependent on the very existence of the Islamic order.

Those who have accepted the judicial principle accept some of its entailments. But it will become clear that the special conditions for the acceptance of the judicial system are conditions that apply to all aspects of the country. This is because disputes and judicial contentions take place among people, which only settle down if the Islamic government is around. At times, these disputes are local,

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1- **Al-Ihtijaj,** vol.2, pp.596-600; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.53, pp.174-176.
2- **Jawaher al-Kalam**, vol.21, p.397.

provincial, or international. Islam has legal and judicial solutions, for all of these. Without a strong law-based Islamic government how can it ever be possible to establish the legal, military, space, and ground borders of the country?

We therefore, conclude that the judicial system of Islamic orders and commands is necessary for the Islamic order. In accordance with logical reasoning, only an expert of Islam, who is just, can be appointed for such a position. The Imam’s (‘a) legal deputy is the governor of the Islamic community not appointed by the people. He is appointed by Imam Mahdi (‘a).

Imam Sadiq’s (‘a) supplication approves the position of Wilayah al-Faqih

The transmitted supplications are a profound treasure of Divine knowledge issued as prayers by the Infallible (‘a). These supplications provide us with a huge array of belief solutions. The supplication of Imam Sadiq (‘a), taught to Zurarah, is the best sample relevant to our discussion.

The last sentence of this supplication is: “O God! If I do not recognize your Wali (deputy), I would go astray in my religion.”[1] The lack of recognition of the Wali at any time would lead one to go astray in his religion. Is this recognition only relevant at the time of Imam Mahdi (‘a)? Does it also include his absence? Definitely, it applies to his absence as well. It is a fact that a part of the Imam’s (‘a) responsibilities cannot be performed in his physical absence. Can we act out some of these tasks and forget the rest? If so, who could be the Imam’s (‘a) deputy while he is hidden?

While the Imams (‘a) lived, when they themselves were not available, who would they appoint as their deputies? Were they the Imam’s (‘a) special students who could understand his intentions, or were they individuals who shared no knowledge with the Imam (‘a)? Imam Ali (‘a) sent his students to Egypt.[2] Imam Husayn (‘a) sent Muslim Ibn Aqil, to Kufah, as his deputy.[3] This is because nobody could be

1- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.337.
2- **Nahjul-Balagha,** letter No.53.
3- **Al-Luhuf**, pp.51-52.

the Imam's ('a) deputy unless he had been educated in the Imam's ('a) ideology:

The stranger's ear is not the place

Proper for the Message Brought by the messenger Angel[1] The numerous narrations concerning the deputation of jurisprudents have come down to us from the Innocent Imam ('a) [2] although, beside these narratives, our logic, too, would lead us to this conclusion.

One who does not recognize Imamate and the Imam, will not recognize the deputy of the Innocent Imam ('a) during his absence. Such a person does not recognize his religion, either. As a result, the Islamic Republic has two sides for him: republic and Islamic. Such a system starts from the bottom and goes from plurality to unity. Some shares go to the people, and some go, more or less, to Islam. Such political non-religious systems are run by people.

From a monotheistic perspective, and based on Imam Sadiq's ('a) supplication, we conclude that the Islamic republic means a republic whose people have accepted Islam and are obliged to obey all its Laws and principles.

Wilayah al-Faqih, a progressive religious principle applicable during the absence of Imam Mahdi ('a), is based on the just government of jurisprudents, and not by any individual. We see that Imam Khomeini in this Divine system, was just Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini and had one vote to drop in the box. Like other citizens he used to go to the polls to drop his vote. If his vote, as of a citizen, had Islamic value, why did he need the confirmation of people to accept such a great position?

The secret behind this issue lies in the fact that Imam Khomeini cast his vote because legally he was like other citizens. But the confirmation of his position was legally done by people. For this reason, any constitution in the country, such as the Guardian Council, or the president or other political constitutions need the confirmation of the Wilayah Faqih. Only those officials are appointed, and only

1- Hafiz Poetry, p.387, Lyric.286.
2- See **al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.67; **Wasa'il al-Shi'ah,** vol.27, pp.136-140.

those constitutions become legal, which the legal personality of the Wilayah Faqih, on behalf of Imam Mahdi (‘a), has confirmed.

Now we understand how the statement of Imam Sadiq (‘a), which was taught to Zurarah[1] in the form of a supplication, has illuminated the continuation of Wilayah e Faqih during the Imam’s (‘a) absence and introduced the just Wali al-Faqih. Those who do not recognize Imam Mahdi (‘a) do not recognize his deputy. The Innocent Imam is the Prophet’s (‘a) deputy and the Wali al-Faqih is the deputy of the Imam (‘a). Thus, those who do not recognize Revelation or Prophet-hood, do not recognize Imamate. and in the same way, those who do not recognize the Innocent Imam (‘a), may not recognize his deputy or the Wali al-Faqih.

Failure of any revolution prior to the rise of Imam Mahdi (‘a)

Imam Sadiq (‘a) stated: “Anyone from our Household who rises prior to the rise of Imam Mahdi (‘a) in order to stop an injustice or to correct an injustice will suffer greatly and his rise will bring forth our and our Shiite’s annoyance.”[2]

Motawakkil Ibn Harun, the narrator of Sahifah e Sajjadiyyah says: “I saw Yahya Ibn Zeid Ibn Ali, the nephew of Imam Zainul Abedin (‘a) while he was on his way to Khorasan. I greeted him and he asked me about the health of his nephews in Medina; he was especially concerned about the health of his uncle, Imam Baqir (‘a). I told him about the health of Imam Baqir (‘a) and informed him about their sorrow over his father, Zaid Ibn Ali. Yahya Ibn Zaid asked me: “Have you met my nephew, Ja’far Ibn Mohammad (‘a)?” I answered, “Yes.” He asked me if he had said anything about him. I replied, “Yes.” He asked: “What did he say about me?” I was reluctant to tell him what I had heard. But Yahya insisted. Then, I said: “I heard him say about you that you too, like your father, are dead.”

Motawakkil says, “After hearing about his death, Yahya Ibn Zaid gave me the Sahifah e Sajjadiyyah written by Imam Zainul Abedin (‘a) and his own father, Zaid. He said: ‘Keep it until I die, and

1- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.337.
2- **Sahifah Sajjadiyyah,** “introduction”, p.12; **Riad al-Salikin**, vol.1, pp.188-192.

them give it to two of my cousins, Muhammad and Abraham, the children of Abdullah Ibn Hasan Ibn Hasan Ibn Ali (‘a), since these two can keep this book after me.’”

Motawakkil continues: “After Yahya Ibn Zaid was killed; I went to see Imam Sadiq (‘a) and informed him of what had gone between me and Yahya. He wept, saying: “May God bless my cousin.” Then he added: “He has not risen against the Imam of righteousness and he shall never do so.”[1] This narration and other similar narrations indicate that if anybody, prior to Imam Mahdi’s (‘a) rise, revolts and whether he claims to be the Imam or not, but the time of his revolution is not ripe, shall be doomed to destruction. But if one invites people towards the Innocent Imam (‘a), the religion, because of his brave actions, shall progress.[2]

The commentator of Sahifah e Sajjadiyyah, in the introduction to his exposition, has narrated a narration from Imam Sadiq (‘a), whose content confirms a rise, for which necessary precautions have been considered, even if the number of Holy Fighters is small. That narration runs like this:[3]

Sadir Sairafi, in his meeting with Imam Sadiq (‘a), said to him:

“I swear to God, your patience and your intention not to rise is not appropriate for you any more.”

The Imam (‘a) asked him the reason.

He answered: “The number of your Followers, the Shiites, has risen tremendously. If Imam Ali (‘a) had so many followers, Tayyim and Addi would have never dared to usurp his caliphate.”

The Imam (‘a), then, asked him: “How many followers do I have, according to estimates?”

He answered: “One hundred thousand.”

1- See the introduction of Sahifah e Sajjadiyyah, pp.8-12. Although this class of narrations assume that Zaid Ibn Ali had risen without the consent of the Innocent Imam (‘a) and had caused him sorrow, other narrations and historical evidence are against this assumption. See the personality and rise of Zaid Ibn Ali, published by the society of Instructors.

2- **Nahjul-Balagha,** Sermon 3, Paragraph 16.

3- **Al-Kafi,** vol.2, p.1242; Riad al-Salikin, vol.1, pp.196-197.

He repeated: “One hundred thousand?”

He replied, “Yes, and perhaps two hundred thousand.”

He repeated: “Two hundred thousand?”

He replied, “Yes, and perhaps half of the world population.”

The Imam (‘a) paid no attention to him any more. After some silence, he asked: Can you please, carry us to Yanbu‘?[1]

He replied, “Yes.”

“The Imam ordered for a donkey and a mule to be ready. Then they reached a territory with red soil. Looking at a shepherd who was grazing some goats, the Imam (‘a) said: ‘O Sadir, I swear to God if the number of my Shiites (who are really brave) was the number of these goats, my silence towards the arrogant would not be justifiable.’ Then we dismounted and prayed. After praying, he started counting the goats; there were just seventeen.”

Sayyid As-Sajedin (‘a), upon his arrival at Damascus, was asked by Abraham Ibn Talhe Ibn Obeidullah the following question: “Who won the battle?”

He answered: “If you want to recognize the hero of this battle, at the call for prayer, ask people, you will see who they name.” Although the Household (‘a) was brutally victimized at Karbala, their martyrdom enlivened the name of the Prophet (s) and Islam forever. Thus, martyrdom was not a sign of failure for such Divine Fighters. And their apparent defeat did not prove that they had fought in vain; rather, according to the Qur’an, it was

﴿إِحۡدَى ٱلۡحُسۡنَيَيۡنِ﴾

“One of two most excellent things.”[2]

If some narrations condemn every rising, they are not acceptable, if the uprising is in accordance with the basic principles of the Qur’an. This is because there are numerous narrations concerning the

1- A Fortification outside Medina, on the way of the Egyptian pilgrims, which has good weather.
2- *Qur’an 9: 52.*

principle of "enjoining the good and forbidding the evil," holy struggle, the establishment of Divine "hudud," and the revival of the word Allah, which indicate that preventing the revival of religion is an absurd statement. Proclaiming the prevention of a religious government during the Imam's (‘a) absence is equivqlent to accepting a non-religious government of unqualified persons over the Islamic Ummah; and this is surely against the Messenger of God's (s) wishes and intentions.

The Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Republic of Iran are auspicious movements. These two happened at a time when the leaders of these movements did not attract people to themselves; rather, they worked for Islam. As a result, the Islamic revolution brought forth a government which imbalanced the world political equations and become a model for the struggle of many Muslims and other exploited nations against tyranny. This revolution called people towards the Imamate of Imam Mahdi (‘a) and his deputy, and the people simultaneously uttered that they were the ummah of Wali e Asr (Imam Mahdi ‘a). Any endeavor, which now takes place in this country is because of the presence of Imam Mahdi (‘a), and this ummah is impatiently waiting for his physical reappearance and holding the banner of this Islamic system in his capable hands.

Postponing the defense of Islam until Imam Mahdi (‘a) rises

Muslims believe that in accordance with Qur'an and the House-hold (‘a) the principle of "enjoining the good and forbidding the evil" is one of the most compulsory principles, whose revival causes the dynamism of the Divine commands, and its abandonment leads to misery. However, some persons suffering from double fears (they fear both God and people), erroneously assume that during the Imam's (‘a) absence, people should mind their own business and ignore others. Based on the verse of the Qur'an

﴿يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ عَلَيۡكُمۡ أَنفُسَكُمۡۖ لَا يَضُرُّكُم مَّن ضَلَّ إِذَا ٱهۡتَدَيۡتُمۡ﴾

“O you who believe! Take care of your souls; he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way.”[1]

They assume that the principle of “enjoining the good and forbidding the evil,” and fighting for religion should be postponed until Imam Mahdi (‘a) rises. They say that everybody should mind his own business and every believer should live according to his own beliefs, and that it is useless to deal with other people’s affairs.

This is fallacious reasoning because enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, are definite orders of the Holy Qur’an, and nobody can prosper without these principles. Those who have not carried out God’s commands and are not just in their deeds do not prosper and place themselves among the “gone astray.”

The Islamic Revolution a reflection of a Revolution by Imam Mahdi (‘a)

Some doubt the Mahdi’s (‘a) revolution, which will commence with a limited number of his special students and soldiers and change the governing style of the whole earth. They doubt that a limited number of soldiers can ever achieve this great feat.

The Islamic revolution is a good example of such a movement. Imam Khomeini made it crystal clear that, with a limited number of people, it is possible to lead a great movement against the oppressors, and awaken people to witness a Divine and Islamic government.

The all-experienced leader of this revolution, with limited financial resources but great hope of Divine assistance, initiated a movement at the world level. Some foreign journals at the time of his exile to Paris, wrote under his picture: “This exiled person has caused problems for the east, puzzled the west and involved the whole world.” The fact is that he could, with his pen, motivate not only Iran and the Middle East, but the whole world.

1- *Qur’an 5: 105.*

When a deputy of Imam Mahdi ('a) can claim such a feat, Imam Mahdi ('a), can capture the whole world with his troops of 313 students. Of course, others will eventually join the troops of Imam Mahdi ('a).

Thus, the glorious Islamic Revolution, in many ways, foreruns the universal revolution of Imam Mahdi ('a). No doubt, the Mahdawi revolution will be a reference point in the history of man. Khomeini's revolution was also a reference point in the history of Muslims. Comparing it to the Mahdi's ('a) revolution is like a dewdrop compared to an ocean.[1] Prophets, too, were like dewdrops compared to the Mahdi's ('a) revolution. He is the one, in whose favor Imam Ali ('a) said: "When people prefer their whims over guidance, the Imam prefers the reverse; and when people impose their ideas over the Qur'an, the Imam does the reverse."[2] Mahdawi's revolution will change the hearts of men, convert them into God-centered beings. It will obliterate the blackness of ignorance and misguidance, and substitute fear and anxiety with bravery and confidence. A mini-sample of this unique phenomenon was observed during the Islamic revolution of Iran under the auspicious leadership of Imam Khomeini and the bravery of our troops witnessed during the eight years of the sacred defense.

Those who hugged their sons, kissed them and sent them to the front truly manifested the

﴿يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا﴾

"Guided people by Our commands."[3]

A change of hearts could create such instances of sacrifice. The zeal to defend the Islamic country, the great desire for martyrdom and a rejection of material life was not imaginable except by relying on the "(Imams who) guided people by Our commands." These are the

1- **Hafiz lyrics**, p.641, lyric No.471: when I delved in my wisdom to solve love issues, I found out it is just like a dew on the surface of the ocean.
2- **Nahjul-Balagha,** sermon 138.
3- *Qur'an 21: 73.*

reserved soldiers of God, who at the time of need leave places of safety for altars of sacrifice. The Qur’anic verse:

﴿قُل لَّوۡ كُنتُمۡ فِي بُيُوتِكُمۡ لَبَرَزَ ٱلَّذِينَ كُتِبَ عَلَيۡهِمُ ٱلۡقَتۡلُ إِلَىٰ مَضَاجِعِهِمۡ﴾

“Say, had you remained in your houses, those for whom slaughter was ordained would certainly have gone forth to the places where they would be slain.”[1]

Materialized.

The Qur’an instructed Martyrs during the Imam’s (‘a) absence

The bird of martyrdom flies only when purely stimulated. The martyr has “God’s knowledge” and relies on His assistance. The soldier of such a war has the desire to drink of the pond of Kawthar and meet Allah. All these become possible only through God’s blessing and the path of the Household (‘a).

God Almighty declared:

﴿وَإِذَا قُرِئَ ٱلۡقُرۡءَانُ فَٱسۡتَمِعُواْ لَهُۥ وَأَنصِتُواْ﴾

“And when the Qur’an is recited, then listen to it and remain silent.”[2]

Sincere believers waited to receive God’s message.

God Almighty said:

﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱشۡتَرَىٰ مِنَ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمۡ وَأَمۡوَٰلَهُم بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ ٱلۡجَنَّةَۚ يُقَٰتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ فَيَقۡتُلُونَ وَيُقۡتَلُونَ﴾

“Surely, Allah has purchased from the believers, their persons and their property and in return, they shall have the garden. They fight in Allah’s way, they slay and are slain.”

They understood that it was time for them to strike a bargain with Allah.

1- *Qur’an 3: 154.*
2- *Qur’an 7: 204.*

God Almighty said:

﴿وَأَعِدُّواْ لَهُم مَّا ٱسۡتَطَعۡتُم مِّن قُوَّةٍ﴾

"And prepare against them what force you can."[1]

So they honestly and steadfastly announced their readiness. God Almighty said:

﴿وَقَٰتِلُوهُمۡ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتۡنَةٞ وَيَكُونَ ٱلدِّينُ كُلُّهُۥ لِلَّهِ﴾

"And fight with them until there is no more persecution, and religion is only for Allah."[2]

They fought against every exploitation and dictatorship.

God Almighty said:

﴿ٱللَّهُ أَن يُحِقَّ ٱلۡحَقَّ بِكَلِمَٰتِهِۦ وَيَقۡطَعَ دَابِرَ ٱلۡكَٰفِرِينَ ۝٧ لِيُحِقَّ ٱلۡحَقَّ وَيُبۡطِلَ ٱلۡبَٰطِلَ وَلَوۡ كَرِهَ ٱلۡمُجۡرِمُونَ﴾

"And Allah cut off the roots of the unbelievers, that He may manifest the truth of what was true and show the falsehood of what was false, though the guilty disliked it."[3]

So they aimed only to show the truth and annihilate falsehood.

God Almighty said, *"Then fight the leaders of unbelief; surely, their oaths are nothing, so that they may desist,"* and they realized that the true enemies of human communities were the blood-sucking oppressors who shunned every resolution, international agreement and pledge. A man can be faithless and not hurt others; or a blood-sucking wolf, hated by everybody.

God Almighty said, *"Go forth, light and heavy, and strive hard in Allah's way with your property and your persons; this is better for you, if you know,"* so they sacrificed both their property and lives.

1- *Qur'an 8: 60.*
2- *Qur'an 8: 39.*
3- *Qur'an 8: 7-8.*

Those who were denied being sent to the Front, became manifestations of the verse:

﴿تَوَلَّواْ وَّأَعۡيُنُهُمۡ تَفِيضُ مِنَ ٱلدَّمۡعِ حَزَنًا أَلَّا يَجِدُواْ مَا يُنفِقُونَ﴾

“They went back while their eyes overflowed with tears on account of grief for not finding that which they should spend.”[1]

God Almighty said:

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّبِيُّ جَٰهِدِ ٱلۡكُفَّارَ وَٱلۡمُنَٰفِقِينَ وَٱغۡلُظۡ عَلَيۡهِمۡۚ وَمَأۡوَىٰهُمۡ جَهَنَّمُۖ وَبِئۡسَ ٱلۡمَصِيرُ﴾

“O Prophet, Strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites and be unyielding to them; and their abode is hell, and evil is the destination.”[2]

So they struggled against two fronts, the unbelievers and hypocrites, and perceived internal enemies as foreigners, and avoided them.

God Almighty said,

﴿أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي ٱلۡأَمۡرِ مِنكُمۡ﴾

“Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those in authority from among you.”

So they asked the sincere deputies [of Imam Mahdi (‘a)] for their advice and carried it out. Finally, what they had learned from the Glorious Qur’an they saved in their long-term memories, and tried not to mix it with other approaches.

The Islamic Revolution a Foreground for the Revolution of Mahdi (‘a)

The Islamic revolution, the result of the endeavors of the youth, elderly, women and men of this country, led by the Mahdi’s (‘a)

1- *Qur’an 9: 92.*
2- *Qur’an 9: 73.*

deputy, Imam Khomeini, had no objective but to pave the ground for the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (‘a). However, this feat will be possible only if the founders of this revolution can use science to enhance their good deeds and put oppression aside. They should also resist the temptation to don the shirt of the modern ignorance so that they can present an Islamic model of life to the world.

CHAPTER TWO
TRUTH BEHIND THE WAITING

Expectation of Deliverance

Deliverance through Imam Mahdi (‘a) is the greatest desire of the followers of the Household, and the dynamic motive of the Islamic Community. For this to materialize, a firm belief in the Mahdi’s (‘a) reappearance is crucial. The Prophet of God (s) considers it as the best deed on the part of the ummah to wait for the Imam’s (‘a) deliverance.[1] For true believers, the Imam’s (‘a) reappearance means true deliverance.

His Holiness Abdul Azim Hasni said: “I had the honor to meet Jawad ul A’immah (‘a). I wanted to ask him whether the *Qa’im* was Imam Mahdi (‘a) or somebody else. Before I asked, he said: O Aba al-Qasim. Our *Qa’im* is the same person as Imam Mahdi (‘a), for whom we should wait; and at the time of his appearance, we should obey him. He is my third son. I swear to God, Who appointed Mohammad (s) as His Messenger and appointed me as an Imam, that if there remains only one day in the life-time of the whole universe, God Almighty will prolong that day till our *Qa’im* appears and rises to fill the world with justice. Allah the Compassionate will arrange everything within one night as He arranged everything for Moses within one night. Moses left home to bring back some wood and flame for his house-hold. Upon his return he was honored to be a Prophet.” Imam Jawad (‘a) then said: “The best deed of our Shiites is to wait for that Imam.”[2]

Waiting, according to the school of the Household (‘a)

The concept of a savior at the end of Time is a universal one, which has attracted people around the pivot of waiting. The Islamic Ummah, based on the teachings of the Prophet of Islam (s), consider Imam Mahdi (‘a) as the true embodiment of this Savior. Among the same

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1- **Kamal al-Din,** vol.2, p.357; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.52 p.128.
2- **Kamal al-Din,** vol.2, p.49.

ummah, a group has received the knowledge from unqualified sources; the result is that they have gone astray.

The waiting of the followers of the Household (‘a) is different from the waiting of others. We believe, the promised Mahdi (‘a) is living, but hidden. Others believe the Imam will come but he is not born yet.

You might see yourself as deformed
In the mirror, every time you look at it;
You are deformed, not the mirror
First, start correcting yourself.
One was descending a well:
And he saw the reflection of the moon,
The moon from above called him
I am here, not in the well- water:
Don’t try to look for the moon
In that hole because existence
Can not be found in non-existence.
If a man plants Coloynith,
He will not harvest sugar cane.[1]

There are numerous narrations concerning the true meaning of “waiting.” One of them is the narration, which Abu Basir narrates from Imam Sadiq (‘a): “One who truly wishes to wait for Imam Mahdi (‘a) has got to be ready, even if he can only prepare an arrow.”[2]

From this narration, we will realize that one cannot consider himself one of those who truly wait for the Imam (‘a) if he has not prepared himself, and this concept is referred to in the supplications delivered on the nights of the month of Ramadhan: “Let me have my martyrdom next to your Wali.”[3]

The one who desires to see the Imam (‘a) and hopes for improvement but he himself is not a man of war, he has in fact stated a falsehood,

1- **Poetry of Shams Tabrizi**, p.501, No 1338.
2- **Al-Ghaibah,** Nu’mani, p.320; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.52, p.366.
3- **Iqbal al-A‘mal,** p.381; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.95, p.117.

and he is not sincere to himself because he expects the Imam to improve things without contributing anything; true waiting for the Imam (‘a) is to be prepared militarily. The Imam will encounter wars after he reappears. Thus, only those who are prepared can help him.

In the field of knowledge, one has to be prepared to employ his pen; and in the arena of war, he has to be ready to fight. If he is prepared in these two fields, he will succeed in both wars:

﴿طُوبَىٰ لَهُمْ وَحُسْنُ مَآبٍ﴾

“A good final state shall be theirs and a goodly return.”[1]

Of course, the main part of the Imam’s (‘a) success depends on the cultural growth of human society.

The true sense of waiting, in the school of the Household (‘a), then, is to follow the advice of the Imams (‘a), in general, and to be equipped with the weapon of science and knowledge.

Being equipped with knowledge entails different facts. The most significant of these is the culture, which plays its role in paving the ground for the Imam’s (‘a) appearance. A true sense of waiting has a tremendous effect in correcting the culture of waiting.

Imam Baqir (‘a) has said: “May God bless the believer who, for our sake, controls his self; may God bless those servants of God who carry out our affairs.”[2]

Those who truly wait for the reappearance of the Imam (‘a) should strive to enliven the knowledge of Qur’an and the Household (‘a), and to obey the commands of the Qur’an and the Household. In this way, the Blessings of God will be with them.

The conditions for the materialization of waiting

A man waits only for the one who can solve his problems. The loftier the knowledge and recognition of the Imam, the more profound is the

1- *Qur’an 13:29.*
2- **Al-Mahasin**, vol.1, p.278; **Kamal al-Din,** vol.2, p.644; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.52, p.126.

waiting. The only man living, is the one waiting to meet the Imam. Those who are not, are those having already gone astray.

The earth is lit with the light of an Innocent Imam: there are numerous narrations confirming this notion. Imam Sadiq (‘a) has stated: “God is too just to leave the earth with no just Imam.”[1] Imam Sadiq (‘a), confirming the Innocent Imam Mahdi (‘a), goes so far as to say: “If the earth is left with no Imam, it would be angry.”[2] He also says: “Since the creation of the universe, till the Day of Judgment the earth can never be without an Imam, and if this is not the case then the worship of God seems absurd. However, this sign of Allah is sometimes present and at times absent.”[3]

Based on this reasoning, the true believers in the Household (‘a) believe that there has always been an Innocent Imam, who is God’s deputy on the earth; and, that Imam Mahdi (‘a) is living. The others believe Imam Mahdi (‘a) is still not born.

Now that we firmly believe that Imam Mahdi (‘a) lives but is absent, we have to recognize him well and be ready to serve him accordingly. This is because according to the Prophet (s) those who have not recognized Imam Mahdi (‘a) have lived the life of an Ignorant and as a result have died the death of the Ignorant man.[4] This is because death is the result of life and everybody dies the way he has lived. The one who dies the death of the Age of Ignorance, his life has been one of Ignorance, because anybody who has lived rationally will die a reasonable death. The Holy Qur’an recommends that one die the death of a Muslim.

All Divine Prophets (‘a) recommended that one should die Muslim:

﴿وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَآ إِبۡرَٰهِـۧمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعۡقُوبُ يَٰبَنِيَّ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصۡطَفَىٰ لَكُمُ ٱلدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُم مُّسۡلِمُونَ﴾

1- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.178.
2- Ibid, p.179.
3- **Kamal al-Din,** vol.1, p.314.
4- **Al-Kafi,** vol.2, p.21.

"And the same did Abraham enjoin on his sons so did Jacob. O my sons! Surely Allah has chosen for you this faith; therefore, die not unless you are Muslims."[1]

﴿يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِۦ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ﴾

"O, you who believe, be careful of your duty to Allah with the care which is due to Him, and die not unless you are Muslims."[2]

One who has recognized his Imam has realized that he is the manifestation of

﴿أَفَمَنْ هُوَ قَآئِمٌ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ﴾

"Is He then Who watches every soul as to what it earns?"[3]

The reins of the whole universe are, with God's permission, in his hands. As a result, such a person lives a Muslim's life and dies a Muslim's death.

One's reasonable life consists of knowing Imamate, believing in Wilayah, recognizing the true Imam besides worshipping God. Or else the Saqifah-based governors, the oppressors of Damascus, the man-killing governors of Karbala, the Abbasids and Marwanid blood-sucking governors, more than anybody else, knew different angles of the apparent lives of their contemporary Imams.

The truth of waiting, the most significant worship, is accompanied by hope and devoid of whims. The Holy Qur'an, confirming hope considers vain desires as superstitious:

﴿لَّيْسَ بِأَمَانِيِّكُمْ وَلَآ أَمَانِيِّ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ﴾

"This shall not be according to your vain desires, nor according to the vain desires of the followers of the Book."[4]

1- *Qur'an 2: 132.*
2- *Qur'an 3: 102.*
3- *Qur'an 13: 33.*
4- *Qur'an 4: 123.*

Omniyah is raw desire, but hope is the fruit which flourishes. An example is the hope of a mother for the prosperity of her child. Such a mother, due to that hope, does not refrain from breast-feeding and taking care of her child. A gardener who hopes for the growth of his saplings plants them, waters them and keeps them in good shape. The Honorable Messenger of God (s) stated: "Hope is a blessing; if there was no hope, no mother would breast-feed her child and no gardener would plant a tree."[1]

The value of waiting and the generosity of the Man we are waiting for

The value of waiting depends on the generosity of the man we are waiting for. This is because the area of his effects includes man and other creatures. He will terminate the burning hell of domination and establish the utopian city in which justice, brother-hood and moderate living prevail. Thus, all are waiting for his reappearance.

The old knowledge can never be hidden
Though on the surface, you are absent,
But in fact, I can see you in front of me
You are my ultimate goal, you are
My main source for endeavor and hope;
I will not leave your skirt, Until I meet you.[2]

The best kind of waiting is for the waiting soul to mingle with the soul of the awaited one. Such a waiting changes a dark, hopeless, ignorant life into a bright, hopeful, enlightened one. He could, with God's permission, change it, "And We made them Imams who guided (people) by Our command." Such a person would find the world very sweet and nothing would entice his heart in the wrong way. This is true both here and in the Hereafter:

1- A'lam al-Din, p.295; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.74, p.173.
2- Sa'di's collection of poems, p.644, No.406.

﴿إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ ٱللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾

"Now surely the Friends of Allah, they shall have no Fear, nor shall they Grieve."[1]

The best way for us to obtain such a high standing is for him to wait behind the curtains so that we could be ready on time.

God's men will pull aside the curtains of the unknown and let us know what is behind them. The Innocent ones did exactly this. How ever, we are too weak to be able to look behind the scenes. We can only be alert and never neglectful. "We should be near the curtains at all times so that, if a breeze blows the curtain aside, we can get a glimpse of what is behind the curtain."[2]

To witness the Imam ('a) or be witnessed by him

There are many who desire to witness Imam Mahdi ('a) and have gone through a lot of hardships and ascetism to do so. Day and night they have begged God to show them the luminous sun.[3] But the learned enthusiasts have tried hard to be observed by the Imam rather than observe him, and to arrive at "Look at us so that we can see you."[4]

God Almighty's Look is of two kinds:

1- A general Look, which is confirmed by verses such as

﴿إِنَّهُۥ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍۭ بَصِيرٌ﴾

"Surely He sees everything,"[5]

﴿عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ شَهِيدٌ﴾

"A witness of all things,"[6]

1- *Qur'an 10: 62.*
2- **'Awali al-La'ali**, vol.4, p.118; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.68, p.221.
3- **Al-Balad al-Amin**, p.83.
4- **Iqbal al-A'mal,** p.607.
5- *Qur'an 67: 19.*
6- *Qur'an 5: 117.*

And,

﴿بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾

“*He knows all things.*”[1]

﴿لَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْهُ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ﴾

“*Not the weight of an atom becomes absent from Him.*”[2]

According to this, nothing is hidden in the universe from God Almighty.

2- A specific Look, which is directed only towards His men. Not every one can be exposed to such a look: “As for those, who take a small price for the covenant of Allah and their own oaths, surely they shall have no portion in the Hereafter, and Allah will not speak to them, nor will He look upon them on the day of resurrection.” This is the Look of God, which we expect when we supplicate, asking God for His specific Look: “Have a look upon us, a look of Benevolence.”

Imam Mahdi (‘a), too, being a manifestation of God, enjoys both kinds of looks: Based on his general look, he knows, with God’s permission, all our deeds and sees them. He even is aware of the functions of our limbs and body-organs. This is because he is the heart of hearts and the soul of all souls. That honorable being, although he sees everyone, he ignores to look to look upon some; this indignation being the manifestation of “Allah will not look upon them.”

Anyone who wishes to see himself in the presence of the Imam (‘a) tries hard to deserve such an honored look. Under such conditions can such a person be protected against errors and miseries. He would then, enjoy that specific look of the Imam (‘a). The mere looking at the Imam does not guarantee one’s prosperity. Examples of such cases are those who were with the Prophet of Islam (s), or Imam Ali (‘a) or other Imams (‘a), saw them, heard their speeches, but never benefitted. Thus, it is preferable to be seen by the Imam (‘a),

1- *Qur’an 2: 29.*
2- *Qur’an 34: 3.*

rather then see his face, because a one-way look from the beholder towards the Imam (‘a) would not solve his problem.

Wisdom as the guide toward true waiting

True waiting is the basis for the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (‘a), and this sacred waiting can be studied from different angles. It has its effect on paving the ground for the rise of the sun and keeping the light of Revelation burning. All these would take place only if wisdom illuminated our souls. Thus, equipped with wisdom, some have to defend Revelation and suppress those who uselessly try to mislead the young and create doubts in their minds.

Wisdom is the strongest weapon and is God’s final Word to man. This happened when Ibn Sakit asked Imam Rida (‘a): “At the time when there are many who claim Immamte, caliphare, and wilayah, how can people approach God? Imam Rida (s) mentioned wisdom and its use. Then Ibn Sakit, in the presence of Imam Rida (‘a) said: “I swear to God I got the right answer.”[1]

Those who are truly waiting for Imam Mahdi (‘a) should be all eyes, so that they can

﴿أُوْلُواْ بَقِيَّةٍ﴾

“Possess understanding.”[2]

And be among the well-known seekers of survival; and Almighty God has confirmed the survival of the distinguished learned men.

1- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.25.
2- *Qur’an 11: 116.*

CHAPTER THREE
THOSE WHO WAIT

Superiority of the act of waiting by the educated

Those who have realized the truth behind waiting are doing the right thing in waiting to see the Imam of their Age, and in preparing the conditions for his appearance. But among all people who are waiting, the educated have special advantages. These will be ready when the Imam (‘a) appears, to help him in implementing his Divine plan and enact the necessary improvements. People of this kind imitate what their leader does, both in knowledge and in practice. These educated ones are special students of Imam Mahdi (‘a).

The stages of perfection among those who wait

The one who desires to escape the darkness, which prevails during the absence, has to recognize the Imam of his time. If he recognizes his Imam in the light of Monotheism and Prophet-hood, he will recognize the Imam’s schedule for the establishment of his government, and know the details of his program. Such a person will do his best to prepare his community for such changes. Such an individual will deserve to receive blessings from his Imam, and be illuminated with the light of faith.

Those who wait, delivered from despair

Rcognizing Imam Mahdi (‘a) is like passing from ignorance to a rational life; waiting for the Imam is life. He shall never despair, because he has heard of God Almighty’s assistance, and believes in this assistance. He works hard to improve his soul, and be the object of God’s promise. “Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good, that He will most certainly make them rulers in the earth as He made rulers those before them. He will most certainly establish for them their religion, which He has chosen for them. He will most certainly, give them security after their fear. They shall serve Me, not associating aught with Me.”

This essence of hope and confidence in God’s assistance is precious. All the Prophets endeavored to maintain it, giving the good news of the next Prophet after each one of them, especially the good news of the coming of the Prophet Mohammad (s). Similarly, each Imam gave people the good news of the coming of Imam Mahdi (‘a).

Such good news has strengthened hope and erased despair among those who wait. A nation who is hopeful, and trusts in God’s help, will be hard working and prosperous.

The virtues of those who wait

The Imam-expecting individuals differ in their knowledge, faith and waiting. Imam Baqir (‘a) defines their features thus: “Anyone of you who is aware of the issue of waiting is like the person who fights with his sword next to the Imam, even with the Messenger of God (s).” Then he added: “Such a person is like the person who partakes in a Holy war next to the Prophet (s) and gets martyred, and there is a verse in the Qur’an.”

﴿وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ بِٱللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦٓ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلصِّدِّيقُونَ ۖ وَٱلشُّهَدَآءُ عِندَ رَبِّهِمۡ لَهُمۡ أَجۡرُهُمۡ وَنُورُهُمۡ﴾

“And as for those who believe in Allah and His Apostles, these it is that are the truthful and the faithful ones in the sight of their Lord: they shall have their reward and their Light.”[1]

The Holy Qur’an describes the Imam – expecting individuals, and the Prophet (s) has welcomed them: “If the Imam is absent from people’s eyes; it is better for his name not to be mentioned till God makes him present. And when God makes him reappear, the earth will be filled with justice and equality after it was filled with injustice.” Then he added “How successful are those who wait for the Imam to appear; How successful are those who reason for his appearance. They are those who are described in Qur’an as

1- *Qur’an 57: 19.*

﴿ٱلَّذِينَ يُؤۡمِنُونَ بِٱلۡغَيۡبِ﴾

"*Those who believe in the unseen.*"[1]

﴿أُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ حِزۡبُ ٱللَّهِۚ أَلَآ إِنَّ حِزۡبَ ٱللَّهِ هُمُ ٱلۡمُفۡلِحُونَ﴾

"*They are Allah's party; now surely, the party of Allah is the successful one.*"[2]

The Lovers of the absent Imam vis-à-vis those who are waiting

The appearance of Imam Mahdi ('a) and the establishment of his just government would require great struggle, because the leaders of infidelity and aggression would not easily surrender to him and, as a result, wars would be inevitable; thus, his uprise would entail great sacrifices.

The true Imam-expecting Muslims are,

﴿ٱلَّذِينَ يَذۡكُرُونَ ٱللَّهَ قِيَـٰمٗا وَقُعُودٗا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمۡ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلۡقِ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ﴾

"*Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth.*"[3]

They reflect and remember God in their supplications, and are "all ready for holy war, martyrdom, and sacrifice."[4]

Ascetic persons and scholars who lack the desire for martyrdom and struggle are fond of the absent Imam, and not of the present Imam. And as soon as the Imam appears, these are the first ones who would flee and would not obey his orders. They care for the absent Imam and not for the *Qa'im* Imam.

Those who want to test the amount of their emotion of waiting should find out if they are fond of the absent Imam or the Qa'im Imam.

1- *Qur'an 2: 3.*
2- *Qur'an 58: 22.*
3- *Qur'an 3: 191.*
4- **Al-Ghaibah,** Nu'mani, p.320.

CHAPTER FOUR
WAITING: ITS DIMENSION AND TASKS, THE RESULTS OF WAITING

1- Hope for Future

Waiting for the appearance of Imam Mahdi (‘a) has numerous individual and social consequences. One of these is hope for a distinct future, which has a great role to play in movements, individual and social endeavors. No doubt, the emphasis placed by the Household (‘a) on the appearance of the Imam (‘a) is on this basis. Imam Ali (‘a) reckons the Blessings of God as one of its consequences: “Be waiting for the Imam and do not lose your hope in God. Surely, the best-loved deed for Allah is your waiting.”[1] Imam Sayyid al-Sajidin (‘a) considers “waiting for the Imam as one of the greatest steps in the positive direction.”[2]

2- Reform in individual and social domains

The one who believes that no struggle for the improvement of affairs is needed during the era of absence would lack any motivation to resist and struggle against the oppressors. By contrast, those who pray for the appearance of the Imam and know that, sooner or later, he will be the governor on the earth and that justice will ultimately prevail, try hard to improve both themselves and others. In this way, they would set the stage for the appearance. Following Imam Ali’s (‘a) approach, he would ask God the following: “O God, we seek a gentle government which will give dignity to Islam and the Muslims, degrade hypocrisy and the hypocrites, and show us the ways to worship you and do our affairs in your ways.”[3]

1- **Al-Khisal,** p.616.
2- **Kamal al-Din,** vol.1, p.437.
3- **Al-Kafi,** vol.3, p.424.

Concerning the tasks of Shiites, during the era of absence, he states, “Engage in supplication and wait for his appearance,”[1] because the waiting contains both reform of oneself and that of others.

3- Endeavors, dynamism, and improvement in all aspects

When Imam Sadiq (‘a) said, “The person waiting for the Imam should help even by making an arrow,”[2] he uses this sentence symbolically. It is urgent for a military man to be prepared militarily, for the economist to solve issues of inflation, unemployment, supply and demand, and to lower the class-differences, and for the jurisprudent, the lawyers, the politicians to eradicate ignorance and resist cultural aggression, and ultimately, protect the very bases of religion.

4- Adopting virtues

One who firmly believes in the existence of his Imam and sees himself present in the presence of God and His deputy. Then in the light of what he has learned from the Qur’an, he abandons sins and mischief permanently; such a waiting purifies his soul and heart.

5- Preparation for the Imam’s (‘a) appearance

Motivation, creating hope and reform would lead the person waiting for the Imam to be equipped with the virtues necessary for welcoming the Imam, because the time of his appearance is unknown, and this preparation would improve a person and his community.

6- Deserving the blissful look of the Household (‘a)

One who genuinely waits for the Imam tries hard to avoid sins. If he does so, he does what his Imam expects him to do; and in this way he deserves the blissful Look of his Imam and other members of the Household (‘a).

1- **Muhaj al-Da‘awat**, p.332.
2- **Al-Ghaibah,** Nu’mani, p.320.

7- Evolution of Knowledge

Making the treasury of human knowledge blossom is a prority in the Imam's program. In many narrations the abundance of people's knowledge at the time of the Imam's appearance is emphasized.[1]

The natural growth of sciences, on the one hand, and the continuous endeavors of scientists and the learned ones, on the other hand, would cause the expansion of issues and the growth of thoughts and ideas. This scientific movement will take place by the devotees of the Imam and will try to suppress the calamities caused by man's selfishness.

8- Arriving at the point of confidence

The individual who has a firm belief in the appearance of the Imam and is always at war with his external and internal devil, can become the referring point in the Imam's speeches. An example is Imam Baqir's (‘a) reference to Abuthar, one of his students. In that speech, the Imam referred to Abuthar's statement by saying: I was present at Abuthar's sermon….[2] Although, Abuthar is not innocent even if he has a lofty position, but, because an Imam refers to him, he stands confirmed as a genuine believer. Although an Innocent Imam would not need to quote a non-Innocent person, he is molding a pattern for others to show them that a person can reach a lofty place through his endeavors and attain a pivotal position in the eyes of his Imam, to the extent that the Imam would quote his words.

9- Arrival at the Lofty position of the Household (‘a)[3]

The lofty position of the Household (‘a) is "the highest position in the eyes of Allah,"[4] and the greatest desire of any knowledgeable believer. Although achieving such a position is not easy for a common man, any sincere disciple can attain a lower degree of such a lofty position. There are cases of genuine individuals who could have been accepted by the Household (‘a) and received their blessings, and been eligible for the lofty position of the Household (‘a) and worn the

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1- Hadith.
2- **Al-Mahasin**, vol.1, p.357; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.2, pp.51-52.
3- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.181.
4- **Kamil al-Zyarat**, p.177.

medal of “He is one of us, the Household.” Examples are Fizzah Khadimah, Abu Zar, Salman, and the like, who had the honor of being close to their contemporary Imams.

Fizzah (God’s Blessings be upon her) worked for Ali (‘a) and Fatima (‘a). She achieved a lofty position, and based on

﴿وَيُطۡعِمُونَ ٱلطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِۦ مِسۡكِينٗا وَيَتِيمٗا وَأَسِيرًا﴾

“And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the captive.”[1]

She could be considered one of them.

The necessity of communicating with Imam al-Mahdi (‘a)

The humane and reasonable aspects of man’s life rest heavily on the revealing facts of the Holy Qur’an. It is because revelation is the only life-giving factor for man and following its instructions help man achieve a reasonable and desirable life:

﴿ٱسۡتَجِيبُواْ لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمۡ﴾

“Answer the call of Allah and His Apostle when he calls you.”[2]

﴿مَنۡ عَمِلَ صَٰلِحٗا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوۡ أُنثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤۡمِنٞ فَلَنُحۡيِيَنَّهُۥ حَيَوٰةٗ طَيِّبَةٗ﴾

“Whoever does good, whether male or female, and is a believer, We will most certainly make him live a happy life.”[3]

The Purified Household (‘a), which is one of the two precious things that the Prophet (s) has left behind, is equal to the Holy Qur’an. Thus the commands of Qur’an are the commands of the Household (‘a). Thus, communication with Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) is life-giving and the provider of man’s optimal life. This is because the Prophet (s), as said before, has declared that the lack of knowledge on the part of man, and his rejection of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a), would lead to his death as an

1- *Qur’an 76: 8.*
2- *Qur’an 8: 24.*
3- *Qur’an 16: 97.*

ignorant person. In the Prophet's opinion, knowledge and wilayah, will always place themselves at the disposal of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a).

How to come in contact with Imam al-Mahdi (‘a)

It needs special merits on the part of the person who wishes to directly connect with Imam al-Mahdi (‘a). For this reason, only a select group had the chance to visit him.

What is necessary for all is to create continuous spiritual relations with Imam al-Mahdi (‘a), which is possible through our conduct. Performing optional prayers and pious acts on behalf of the Imam is the best way to establish a connection with him; however, a person should carry out these prayers without any expectation or else his prayers would not be genuine. We should not ask the Imam for any specific thing; rather, we should wait for his blessings.

Of course, this does not mean that if we have any specific problem we should not ask him for help. It means that when we perform special prayers on his behalf, we should not beg him for any special want. See what Imam Rida (‘a) made his student Zakariyya Ibn Adam. When he asked Imam Rida (‘a) if he should leave Qum, he replied, "Stay in Qum. God, due to your presence in Qum, shall not chastise people of that city."[1] This is one sample of the Imam's (‘a) blessings according to which people of one city escape punishment because of the corpse of a pious man lies in their city.

Another sign of etiquette is to rise when Imam Mahdi's (‘a) name is mentioned; and this is a common practice among his followers.

The false claims of communicating with Imam al-Mahdi (‘a)

Communicating with Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) is the desire of any eager individual; it is a great honor for any learned man to have such connections. But, this precious commodity has been at the mercy of some claimers who falsely claim that they are in touch with Imam al-Mahdi (‘a), and they try to deceive the simple-hearted believers who are always eager to hear any news from their Imam (‘a).

1- **Al-Ikhtisas**, p.87.

Any wise individual is supposed to recognize the fallacious claims and save himself and others from falling into the trap of these crooks.

The two words *Babyyat*[1] and *Sefarat* are used to denote those who fallaciously claim that they are in touch with Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) and that they continuously receive news and commands from him.[2] It is claimed that the Innocent Imam is available to them and that they can relay commands from the Imam to others.

The desire to meet Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) is not new. His advice has also been attained by his close followers. God sends His Blessings through His Deputies. There is a huge difference between this connection with Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) and the false claim of the followers of *Babyyat* and *Sefarat* groups. And this difference can easily be seen by the learned men. Imam al-Mahdi’s (‘a) guidance to Shaykh Mufid and the correction of his Fatwa[3] is a clear case of the Imam’s (‘a) blessings.

Based on wisdom and the resultant narrative orders and commands, the refutation of the pretenders of *Sefarat*, and the interpretation of any message from the Imam is upon the close followers and true experts.[4] The opening of such an issue and the acceptance of their claim would open the door for more false claims on the part of many and bring forth many fabricated Islamic commands, which would culminate in chaos. Thus, it is not only compulsory for us to condemn such claims, but any act of their confirmation is religiously forbidden (haram).

During the Imam’s (‘a) major absence, Muslims have to resort to the qualified jurisprudent, so that in the minor Islamic principles, they can have answers to their problems.

Neither dreams, nor claims of connection with the Imam are valid because, firstly, the Islamic ummah has been ordered not to follow such whims; and secondly, there is no scientific standard to verify the

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1- This word means “mediator.”

2- See **the dictionary of the Islamic sects**, p.88.

3- See **The Life of Men of Science (Qasas al Ulama’)**, p.384.

4- Such as what the Imam (‘a) wrote in his last letter to his last deputy: **Kamal al-Din,** vol. 2, p.193; **Al-Ihtijaj,** Vol.2, p.556 with a little difference.

correctness of such dreams or wrong claims. Under such circumstances, neither the religion of God would remain safe, nor individuals follow the true path. Consequently, chaos would prevail. During the Imam's (‘a) major absence, the door of his communication through his special deputies is closed and nobody, except for the liars, claims communication with him. It should also be noted that the connection of his lovers can only be possible through his general deputies. But we should be careful not to fall in the pit because of our love for these general deputies and we should not transfer the validity of the specific deputies to his general deputies. This is because "any going to extremes has got its root in ignorance."[1]

To sum up:

1- God's Book and the Household (‘a) coupled with logical reasoning are the sources of belief, knowledge, ethical virtues, jurisprudence and legal decrees.

2- There are legal ways for soul-purification guided by our wisdom and valid narrations.

3- Supplications and prayers are highly recommended.

4- The qualified jurisprudents, discourse experts and the like, should be followed by youngsters.

5- The false claims of *Babyyat* and *Sefarat* are like those who falsely called themselves Prophets.

The duties of individuals in the Mahdi's (‘a) supplication

The Promised Existent (‘a) is the greatest teacher of true waiting. His glorious speeches, and the supplications offered by him, are sources of a great educational system, which are of help for his followers. The supplication of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a), which says "O God give us the honor to obey,"[2] clearly explains the whole range of individual and communal tasks of the community. It also teaches us the features and traits that the Imam (‘a) wants us to have: having these features is compulsory.

1- **Nahjul-Balagha,** Hikmah 70.
2- **Al-Balad al-Amin**, p.350.

The personal deeds of people waiting For the Imam (‘a)

An individual should have a special bond with God Almighty, and by supplicating Him internalize the following traits and features:

1- Obedience: Such an individual obeys God Almighty, His Prophet (s) and the Innocent Imam (‘a). He continuously repeats: “O God, give me the honor to obey you.”

2- Piety: Sins are significant barriers on the way to Allah, His Prophet (s) and the Innocent Imam (‘a) and the main cause of man’s fall. For this reason, man should ask God to help him not commit sins. It could be mentioned that despite the classification of sins into minor and major ones, any persistent disobedience towards God is considered a major sin *(wa bu‘d al-ma‘siyah).*

3- Pure intentions: Man must purify his intentions of any temptations towards atheism or hypocrisy. There should be nothing in one’s inclinations except satisfying his God. *(we sidq al-niyyah)*

4- Recognizing the haram (religiously forbidden deeds): The abandoning of sins is impossible unless we recognize what God has considered *haram*. If we do not recognize these forbidden acts, we can easily commit them. Thus, it is compulsory to know them. (*wa ‘irfan al-hurmah)*

5- Asking for specific guidance: What makes man’s life honorable is, to be directed towards Divine religion and possess the virtues. Those who are not directed towards God’s way shall remain in misery and be deprived of God’s Blessings. It is up to man to seek God’s blessings. (*wa akrimna bil huda)*

6- Asking for perseverance in the direction to guidance: Numerous persons gained the guidance of God. But, after a while, through neglect, and turning towards lusts and whims, they lost their way. Thus individuals have to show perseverance on the way to prosperity which God has shown them, and through faith and knowledge, they should keep away from any wrong-doing so that they can be nominated for further Blessings of God. *(wa al-istiqamah)*

One’s speech reveals his wisdom and thought. Thus, protecting one’s language and speech is an obligation for an individual. According to

the instructions of this glorious supplication, genuine persons should ensure the following in their speech:

7- Speaking the truth: Genuine persons are expected to always speak the truth, *(wa saddid al-sinatuna bil sawab).*

8- Talking wisely: Talking nonsense neither helps one's religious deeds nor worldly affairs. The men of faith and belief avoid doing what is not wise, *(wa al-hekma).*

9- Acquiring knowledge: Acquiring knowledge and abandoning ignorance is the most urgent task of the Imam's (ʻa) followers. Since knowledge is not gained without trying hard to get it, acquiring knowledge to purify their hearts and understand the meanings of the inspirations is very important.

10- Acquiring insight: Insight is different from knowledge. The Imam's followers should try hard to achieve insight into affairs.

Economic security

It is the task of individuals to have safe, legal economic transactions so that they can provide their families with food and other needs. It will also hinder illegal economic activities. This feat cannot be obtained unless the content of this noble supplication is carried out.

1- Avoiding unhealthy incomes which are the result of trespassing Divine limits and getting involved in injustice towards others, *(wa tahhir butunana min al-haram).*

2- Avoiding incomes whose source, legal or illegal, is obscure, *(wa al-shubha).*

Social security

Acting out the following six tasks would provide us with social and ethical security:

1- Observing other people's rights is expressed under two general titles:

A- Damaging other people's rights or ignoring them as a whole is unjust. Avoiding injustice, either in his own rights or of others, either in Divine rights or the rights of creatures, either material rights or

spiritual ones should be avoided by the believers in the Imam (‘a), *(wa akfef aidina an al-thulm).*

B- If a person knowingly takes something, whether material or spiritual, out of another person’s property, he is a thief. Persons should respect other people’s rights and not steal anything from others, *(wa al-sadiqah).*

2- Only clean eyes deserve looking at the manifestations of righteousness. This is possible through two acts:

A- When deeds take place with no regard to virtue coupled with sins, the stage is set for debauchery and immorality. Avoidance of such acts is the first task of those who desire to meet the Imam (‘a), *(wa aghdud absarana an al-fujur).*

B- Treason by one’s eye is committed when one does not use it in the right way. This is another task on the shoulders of the Imam’s (‘a) followers, *(wa al-khiyanah).*

3- Individuals should keep their ears clean and purified. This feat is also possible through two acts:

A- Any fruitless speech not been based on sound thinking leads one to absurdity, and make man forget God. It is urgent not to get involved in absurd speech, *(wa saddid asma‘ana an al-laghw)*

B- Backbiting is saying something evil behind a Muslim’s back, which will upset him if he hears it. This creates hatred in the victim’s soul. Thus, it is up to the genuine believers to stop listening to backbiting, *(wa al-ghibah).*

The task of the groups

The following sections deal with the tasks of businesses and other social groups:

The tasks of the Learned

The Learned men of religion and the protectors of the faith, are the forerunners of the ummah. They have an important role in setting up the stage for the appearance of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a). They have two main tasks:

1- Ascetism: Being inclined towards the world is the main hazard for learned men.[1] They should strengthen themselves in austerity so that they do not show any interest in the frivolous worldly affairs and consider this world only as a preparing ground for the Hereafter. Thus, they will correct themselves and the behavior of the ummah, *(wa tafaddal Ala Ulama' bil zuhd)*

2- Giving Advice: Learned men should be purified in their own thoughts, words, and deeds, and truly advise the ummah because their Imam ('a) is the best man in the world in giving advice and in piety, *(wa al-Nathihna)*.

The tasks of university students

The second group is that of university students, especially the students of Seminaries. Their duties include the establishment of the culture of waiting:

Endeavor to acquire knowledge:

1- *Jahd* means putting all one's capabilities and energy in obtaining one's objectives. A scholar should make use of all his energy in obtaining knowledge. An ignorant society cannot set the stage for an Imam who is the treasury of Divine knowledge: *(Khazzan al-ilm)*.[2] Thus, it is the duty of the seminary students to seek knowledge, *(wa Ala al-Motaeallemin bel jahd)*.

2- Keenly desire knowledge. A trait of those students is to have a strong desire to acquire knowledge and be equipped with the latest technology. Both seminary and university students should show a great desire to obtain knowledge, *(wa al-raghba)*.

The tasks of Listeners

The term "listeners" is used for those people who are neither learned men nor students. This group of people, in order to prosper, should be good listeners. They should give heed to the experts. The guidance of this group takes place through two procedures:

1- See **Ghurar al-Hikam,** p.28 and **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.2, p.52.
2- **Man La Yahduruh al-Faqih,** vol.2, p. 609.

1- Following suit: By *ittiba‘* or following somebody else’s ideas or actions. Thus, it is the duty of these “listeners” to follow and imitate those experts in religion, who know the commands of the Innocent Imam (‘a). They should not lose track of the Qur’anic commands and the orders of the Household (‘a), *(wa Ala Almostamein bil ittiba‘)*

2- Preaching: *Maw‘idah* means admonishing people in the right way by giving good advice. The listeners should be open to the wise speeches of the Divine teachers whose knowledge comes from both the Qur’an and the Household (‘a), *(wa al- maw‘idah).*

The Elderly

The elderly, due to their experience and knowledge have a profound effect in educating others. Thus, it is advisable for them to possess the following two traits, which they ask God to provide them with:

1- Keeping their dignity (waqar): Dignity means gravity. According to the supplication, it is the elderly’s task to keep their equanimity, *(wa ‘ala mashayikhina belwaqar).*

2- Keeping their tranquility: *Sakinah* means tranquility or calmness. This is the second trait for the elderly, mentioned in this noble supplication. Although the elderly at times are impatient and restless, they are asked in this supplication to remain calm and poised vis-à-vis anger and anxiety, *(wa al-sakinah).*

A society, in which the elderly are equipped with such traits and remain calm in calamities, becomes a good model for its youth who make the greatest use of these old people’s invaluable experience.

The youth

The youth are, on the one hand, the basic capital of any community, and on the other hand, they are its future-makers. The youth hold a great place in religion. This specific position of the youth makes it compulsory for the community to protect them against evil temptations. The energetic nature of the youth, which can be the best impetus for their elevation, should be controlled by wisdom, or else it will lead the youth in the direction of evil.

A continuous affiliation with God is the best approach for the youth to make the best of their age. Keeping this Divine asset is the issue of this noble supplication:

1- Inaba or ignoring the non-Divine deeds: *Enaba* means ignoring non-Divine thoughts, means paying full attention to Allah. The youth should, by purifying their souls, try hard to distance themselves from what is not Divine. They should always have clean minds.

2- Repentance: The vigor of youth might lead them to commit sins. The youth need to control their deeds and thoughts not to fall in the pit of evil. They should repent for their mistakes and expose themselves to God's Blessings.

Both *inaba* and repentance are obligatory for any age group and under any circumstances. However, the youth would need them more.

Women

Women make a significant portion of the Islamic society; thus their role in providing mental security for the society is great. They can easily improve society and ward off misfortunes. The great calamity on their way is their lack of the traits that the Imam ('a) considers women should possess. In the above noble supplication, he asks God to provide women with these traits:

1- Decency: means protecting oneself against any evil act. Women are the manifestation of God's beauty. They should keep this asset in the best way possible. They should try hard to maintain their modesty from Satanic temptation. Any act against the teachings of the Qur'an and the Household ('a) would terminate in one's destruction, *(wa ala-al-nisa' bil haya').*

2- Purity: Women are the guardians of purity. Keeping one's purity means to keep one's self away from lust and sexual whims. This trait is woman's greatest trait. Ignorant modernity has made women puppets of sexual objectives. Those women who follow Imam al-Mahdi ('a) should improve their souls by maintaining their purity and decency, *(wa al-iffah).*

Note: Allocating these two traits to women does not mean that these traits are specific to woman alone. Everybody deserves to have these traits, but women deserve them more.

The Rich

The rich are the trustees of Divine property and a means for the transition of God’s Blessings to others. There is great difference between the rich who are waiting for their Imam, and those money-mongers who love their trade and property more than God.[1] The first group possesses the following traits:

1- Humility: Haughtiness and pride create distances between man and his God. This feeling is observed in a man who, due to his riches, feels like Pharaoh. He assumes that he has amassed wealth as the result of his hard work, and the power he has got is due to his proper planning. The rich who are waiting to meet Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) should try to be as humble as possible and to think that their wealth belongs to God and consider themselves equal to others, *(wa ‘ala al-aghniya’ bil tawadu‘).*

2- Charity: To thank God for their wealth, the rich people should help the poor, and the needy Muslims. They should not only pay the alms, but also find the needy and help them, *(wa al-sa‘ah).*

The vulnerable classes

In the same way that the rich in an Islamic society are obliged to help the needy, this last group, too, should have the following traits and maintain their dignity:

1- Patience: Patience means to calm one’s internal disturbances. It is not silence or withdrawal. This group of Muslims, who are not rich, should avoid becoming impatient and rely on God after trying their best, *(wa ‘ala al-fuqara’ bil sabr).*

2- Contentment: When extravagance and greed combine, ones faith is lost. Contentment is an endless treasure, which makes one not feel poverty; rather, make one strive for his improvement. Thus, the

1- See *Qur’an 9:24.*

vulnerable group of people should keep their dignity and wait for the appearance of the Imam (‘a), *(wa al-qana‘ah).*

The governors

The governors who manage the political, economic, cultural and social affairs, have to pave the way for the appearance of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a); their major tasks include:

1- Justice: To stay between the two extremes is justice. The governors and managers of an Islamic society are obliged to engage in justice in all layers of their duties.

2- Sympathy: Being too lenient or too severe, both have their nasty consequences. The governors should show sympathy towards their society and lead it towards the Imam’s (‘a) appearance, *(wa al-Shafaqa).*

The Military

Troops are the protectors of the boundaries of the Muslim nation and the Islamic culture. Their tasks include:

1- Victory: According to monotheism,

﴿وَمَا ٱلنَّصۡرُ إِلَّا مِنۡ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلۡعَزِيزِ ٱلۡحَكِيمِ﴾

“And victory is only from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise.”[1]

God’s assistance is always with those who help God’s religion and try to defend and expand it:

﴿إِن تَنصُرُواْ ٱللَّهَ يَنصُرۡكُمۡ﴾

“If you help the cause of Allah, He will help you.”[2]

Based on this, the first duty of the military is to defend the cause of Islam. In this way, they can enjoy God’s assistance, *(wa ‘ala al-ghuzah bennasr).*

1- *Qur’an 3: 126.*
2- *Qur’an 47: 7.*

2- Militarily Equipped: The objective of Imam al-Mahdi ('a) is to stand firm against any aggression which defies monotheism. Based on this portion of the above noble supplication, the military has to try to obtain the latest techniques and military technology and to strengthen its faith and perseverance. Some Qur'anic verses indicate this:

﴿وَأَعِدُّواْ لَهُم مَّا ٱسْتَطَعْتُم مِّن قُوَّةٍ وَمِن رِّبَاطِ ٱلْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِۦ عَدُوَّ ٱللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ﴾

"And prepare against them what force you can and horses tied at the frontier, to frighten thereby, the enemy of Allah and your enemy, and others besides them."[1]

﴿إِن يَكُن مِّنكُمْ عِشْرُونَ صَـٰبِرُونَ يَغْلِبُواْ مِاْئَتَيْنِ ۚ وَإِن يَكُن مِّنكُم مِّاْئَةٌ يَغْلِبُوٓاْ أَلْفًا﴾

"If there are twenty patient ones of you they shall overcome two hundred, and if there are a hundred of you they shall overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve."[2]

The ummah

The Islamic ummah has special and significant tasks to perform. If both the governed and the governors do their tasks properly, never will any enemy of the Islamic society look greedily towards Islamic territory. The subjects' duties include:

Fairness: The first task of the mass of people is to be fair towards one another and towards the Islamic government. The ummah that is not fair towards its government makes it either dictatorial or weak.

The weak and strong points of the non-innocent governors, although being just, effect different aspects of society. However, if people criticise them fairly, their strong points will become stronger, and the

1- *Qur'an 8: 60.*
2- *Qur'an 8: 65.*

weak points will be corrected. Thus, to be fair is among the major tasks of the ummah-in-waiting, *(wa 'ala al-ra'iyyati bil insaf).*

Dealing with people properly: The second task is to treat one another honorably and stop showing baseless hatred towards others. This will unite the Muslims and fill the enemies of Islam with despair. Although honorable treatment of others is obligatory in general, the expressions *"wa al-umra"* (and with the governors) and *"ra'iyyah"* (the subjects) emphasize the bilateral relations of the people and the governors, *(wa husn al-sirah).*

Other duties

This noble supplication includes other items which on the surface would not explain any other tasks for those who wait. A little attention, however would make it possible for any observer to see that only doing certain tasks which the Imam ('a) has in mind would set the stage for his coming.

1- Elevating the level of hygiene and medical treatment is the task of the Islamic government, because healing is in the hands of God: *(wa 'ala marda al-muslimin waal-rahah).*

2- Remembering the dead and asking God's Blessings for them is another desired thing by the Imam ('a). Remembering the Day of Judgment and keeping emotional relations with the dead and sympathizing with the relatives of the calamity-stricken are all important tasks of people, *(wa 'ala mawtahum bil ra'fati wa al-rahmah).*

3- No captives and prisoners are desired by the Imam al-Mahdi ('a). Society should try to arrange social security, make debt-repayment honorably possible, and lessen the reasons for crimes, which are the major factors of imprisonment, *(wa 'ala al-usara' bil khalas wa al-raha)*

4- Emphasize the performance of Haj and Umra to demonstrate religio–political muscle. The Islamic government should provide for the pilgrims to take part in Haj and Umra, which should be accompanied with the necessary instructions, *(wa al-nafaqah wa aqdi ma awjabat Alayhem min al-hajj wa al-umra).*

Remember

1- This supplication, which enumerates the tasks of the Imam-waiting people, describes the Mahdi’s (‘a) government as well. This is because all the virtues mentioned in the supplications will be seen in his Divine government.

2- For all these virtues to be present in one person or in society is nearly impossible; thus, nobody should be expected to possess all these virtues.

3- Every individual should try, in accordance with his capacity, to carry out these tasks and improve his morality.

4- In the acquisition of virtues, stagnation and paralysis, are not permissible; one has to be dynamic and on-going in attaining these virtues. Asking for God’s assistance and resorting to this supplication of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) are helpful.

The need to supplicate

The only possession for man is his worship and his resort to supplications: ‘*iqfir li man la yamliku illa al-du’a.*’[1] The essence of a supplication is one’s confession of helplessness and asking God for help:

﴿أَنتُمُ ٱلۡفُقَرَآءُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ﴾

“You are they, who stand in need of Allah.”[2]

Man should not neglect reciting supplications, besides performing the duties necessary to pave the ground for the Imam’s (‘a) appearance.

The *Du’a e Ahd* is a precious supplication of Imam Sadiq (‘a). This supplication contains the religiously-bound tasks for individuals. The monotheistic testimony with knowledge, the necessity for having constant relations with the Imam (‘a), the perseverance in defending the Imam (‘a), the details of the Imam’s (‘a) schedule are all among the knowledge which this excellent supplication teaches us.

1- **Iqbal al-A‘mal,** p.709.
2- *Qur’an 35: 15.*

The supplication praises God by testifying one's monotheism, confessing His Godhead, mentioning the sending of Prophets and the Book and His Shari'ah. Then, by resorting to the grandeur of God's Names, he is asked to send his Blessings upon Imam al-Mahdi (‘a). This start of the supplication explains the relationship between the Imam (‘a) and monotheism. He, who does not believe in monotheism cannot believe in God or know the Imam (‘a).

Then, the supplicator pledges to remain loyal to the Imam under all circumstances, asking God to be a witness of this promise, and to defend the Imam (‘a) at all times and sacrifice his life for him. Then, the worshipper asks Almighty God to let him meet the Imam (‘a) and ensure the speedy appearance of the Imam (‘a) when corruption reaches its climax.

The last section of this sacred supplication contains the Imam's (‘a) schedule for his government and, in a special way, explains the affairs that the Imam (‘a) will consider when he arrives.

SECTION THREE
AFTER THE IMAM'S ('A) APPEARANCE TO THE MAHDAWID UTOPIA

CHAPTER ONE
UNTIL THE IMAM'S ('A) APPEARANCE

The necessity of the Imam's ('a) appearance

The unity of the Qur'an and the sacred Household ('a) is strong and unbreakable, confirmed by the narration of *Thaqalayn*. The appearance of the Last Imam ('a) is necessary for the establishment of the Qur'an in the universe.

Note 1: The revelation of the glorious Qur'an contains numerous objectives, including

﴿هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ﴾

"Guidance for men."[1]

And

﴿أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ﴾

"We sent down with them (apostles) the Book and the balance that men may conduct themselves, with equity."[2]

A general uprising for justice is impossible without a just government,

﴿كِتَابٌ أَنزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ﴾

"This is a Book which We have revealed to you that you may bring forth men, by their Lord's permission from utter darkness into light."[3]

1- *Qur'an 2: 185.*
2- *Qur'an 57: 25.*
3- *Qur'an 14: 1.*

Note 2: The achievement of these objectives rests on the fact that this Glorious Book is widely printed so that it can be used by all. It can only lead the men who have this Book at their disposal; thus, providing the Glorious Book to real society is obligatory.

The Innocent Imam (‘a) is identical with the Holy Qur’an. Thus, the objectives of this Book, and the objectives of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) are one.

If the Imam remains hidden, those objectives set for Imamate will never be met and, the general public deprived of his presence. The appearance of the sacred being of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) is essential. The length of this absence all depends on the competence and capability of human societies. It is wisely said ‘His disappearance rests on us.”[1]

Numerous narrations deal with the necessity of the Imam’s (‘a) appearance. As narrated by Abdullah Ibn Omar, Imam Husayn (‘a) said: “If of the lifetime of the earth there remained only one day, God would prolong the life of that day so much that one of my off springs would rise and fill the earth with justice; and I have heard this from the Messenger of God (s).”[2]

According to other narrations, too, the appearance of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) is to take place prior to the Day of Judgment: “There are ten signs which will appear prior to the event of the Day of Judgment. They are: Sufyani, dajjal, smoke, dabbat al-Ard, Mahdi’s (‘a) uprise, the rise of the sun in the west, the descent of Jesus Christ (‘a), a devastating earthquake in the Arabian peninsula and a fire which will rise from the bottom of Adan and drive people to the gathering place of mankind on the day of judgment.”[3]

1- **Kashf al-Murad**, p.388; **Al-Maslak fi Usul al-Din**, Muhaqqiq Hilli, p.194, Footnote.
2- **Kamal al-Din,** vol 1, pp.434-435.
3- **Al-Ghaiba**, Tusi, p.436.

The General signs of the Imam's ('a) appearance

1- The revival of keeping people on the right path

There is a supplication in the Qur'anic verse, which we repeat several times daily, asking God to

﴿ٱهۡدِنَا ٱلصِّرَٰطَ ٱلۡمُسۡتَقِيمَ ۝٦ صِرَٰطَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَنۡعَمۡتَ عَلَيۡهِمۡ﴾

"Keep us on the right path. The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favors."*[1]

The right path is the one given to the righteous men and we are asking God to let us tread on that path.

The scared verse of Nisa introduces those persons upon whom favors have been bestowed in the following way:

﴿وَمَن يُطِعِ ٱللَّهَ وَٱلرَّسُولَ فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ مَعَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَنۡعَمَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيۡهِم مِّنَ ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ وَٱلصِّدِّيقِينَ وَٱلشُّهَدَآءِ وَٱلصَّٰلِحِينَۚ وَحَسُنَ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ رَفِيقٗا﴾

"And whoever obeys Allah and the Apostle, these are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed Favors from among the Prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the good, and a goodly company are they."[2]

When the entity "those upon whom Allah has bestowed favors" becomes clear, "the right path," too, would become clear. To be able to tread the right path there are certain conditions, one of which is not to protect the guilty and the wrong doers. One who treads the way of truth knows well that he, in the way that Moses ('a) tells God:

﴿قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَآ أَنۡعَمۡتَ عَلَيَّ فَلَنۡ أَكُونَ ظَهِيرٗا لِّلۡمُجۡرِمِينَ﴾

1- *Qur'an 1:6-7.*
2- *Qur'an 4:69.*

“My Lord! Because Thou hast bestowed a favor on me, I shall never be a backer of the guilty.”[1]

When the sacred being of the Imam (‘a) appears, all these paths will be revived, and in the light of this great favor, the treaders of this path will not protect the guilty. They will use every bit of their energy to revive the truth.

Such people will never protect the guilty, which does not merely mean to be their protectors; rather, being silent and impartial where truth is smashed is also a case of protecting the guilty. In this regard, some commentators narrate from the Last of Messengers (s) who has said “The one who sees the untruth in the community and is silent, is a mouth-shut devil who does not speak.”[2]

2- Appearance as a referring- point in History

The appearance of Imam Mahdi (‘a) will be the beginning of a prosperous era in history. Perhaps the expression, “referring point,” used nowadays, is taking the movement of human society as a line heading towards its ultimate goal. Let us suppose the basic events in the history of man are shown as dots on this line. We will see that some events drastically change the direction of man’s movement and the caravan of men diverges in some other directions. It looks towards the *kiblah* which they are accustomed to, changing the previous direction altogether. Such important events are called “referring points.”

Any referring point has got its specific direction and some extensions. At times, it changes the direction of man’s movement from justice to injustice or from knowledge to ignorance. Such a referring point leads man to destruction. Those who bring forth such referring points in the community or deny revelation altogether, or present others with a baseless belief and become examples of

﴿يَكْتُبُونَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَٰذَا مِنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ﴾

1- *Qur’an 28:17.*
2- **Feqhulsena**, vol.2, p.611; **Wudu’ al-Nabi**, vol.1, p.203.

"Those, who write the book with their hands and then say: this is from Allah."[1]

These people refer guidance to whims and God's statements to their own determination. They erroneously assume that their own beliefs are basic and paraphrase God's utterance on the basis of their own assumptions.

As opposed to this group, there are God's Prophets ('a) and Innocent Imams ('a) and some of their special students, who have caused major diversions in the history of mankind, and changed the direction of man's movement from destruction to enlightment. These referring points, although all have been in the direction of their *kiblah*, the extent of their effectiveness has been different in different locations and at different periods in time. The appearance of the Imam Mahdi ('a) is the all-including referring point which will direct human society at every location and in every epoch of time.

Since knowledge and practice or thought and stimulus, bring about all changes in human societies, Imam al-Mahdi ('a) will create the ultimate point of referring in the dimension of thought and knowledge. He will place sensation and imagination under the control of wisdom, and use wisdom to confirm revelation. He will thus, direct all the perceptual means of society towards God.

In the domain of stimulation or practice, he will put all facets of inclination; attraction and repulsion, lust and anger under the management of practical wisdom, and then, complete practical wisdom by revelation. Thus he will divert whims towards guidance and man's ideas and determinations towards revelation; and ultimately provide human societies with prosperity.

3- Appearance, when man sees his dreams come through

Man encounters improvement each day. But this progress is either not in the direction of man's humanity, or is only one facet of man's perfection; for eg., the industrial revolution. But human society meets fruition only when it encounters progress, both in thinking and practice, working on the axis of justice and rightfulness. And such a

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1- *Qur'an 2: 79.*

perfection, which provides man with truth, is only available to man under the light of revelation and Prophet hood and the radiation of Wilayah and Imamate. Human hearts are in need of Divine radiation so that they can get rid of the darkness of ignorance through the light of guidance and make the domains of injustice and misery non-existent.

Such prosperity is the product of Imam Mahdi's ('a) appearance, which shuns evil thoughts, makes use of human wisdom, and enlivens lost opportunities. He will put out any fire created by war-mongers:

﴿ كُلَّمَآ أَوۡقَدُواْ نَارٗا لِّلۡحَرۡبِ أَطۡفَأَهَا ٱللَّهُۚ ﴾

"*Wherever they kindle a fire for war, Allah puts it out.*"[1]

God's light will be protected from the evil-wishers' spiteful tongues:

﴿يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطۡفِـُٔواْ نُورَ ٱللَّهِ بِأَفۡوَٰهِهِمۡ وَٱللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِۦ وَلَوۡ كَرِهَ ٱلۡكَٰفِرُونَ ﴾

"*They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect his light, though the unbelievers may be averse.*"[2]

The Divine light will enlighten man's life:

﴿وَأَشۡرَقَتِ ٱلۡأَرۡضُ بِنُورِ رَبِّهَا ﴾

"*And the earth shall beam with the light of its Lord.*"[3]

4- The appearance of God's Grace

Grace means God Almighty's Blessing towards His special believers and servants, a blessing so weighty that, except for God's special servants, nobody can bear it. This grace is different from God's other Blessings. Other blessings shall vanish some day, and what is transitory is not subject to God's approval, and cannot, in fact, be referred to as "grace". The rule of

1- *Qur'an 5: 64.*
2- *Qur'an 61: 8.*
3- *Qur'an 39: 69.*

﴿إِذَا ٱلشَّمۡسُ كُوِّرَتۡ﴾

"When the sun is covered."[1]

would apply to the sun, even with its magnificent radiance; the moon, with all its startling display would some day be subject to

﴿وَخَسَفَ ٱلۡقَمَرُ﴾

"The moon becomes dark."[2]

Something which is light one day, but dark the other day, cannot be termed "grace". Grace means, that Blessing of God which is not perishable and not subject to any eclipse and no factor could ever lessen its brightness.

God calls the Prophethood of the Great Prophet of Islam (s) as "grace".

﴿لَقَدۡ مَنَّ ٱللَّهُ عَلَى ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ إِذۡ بَعَثَ فِيهِمۡ رَسُولاً مِّنۡ أَنفُسِهِمۡ﴾

"Certainly Allah conferred a benefit upon the believers when He raised among them an Apostle from among themselves."[3]

His Prophet hood is a candle whose flame cannot ever be put out by anybody. The great Zeinab, addressing the corrupt Omayyad system in Damascus, said "You can do everything evil, but you can never put out the light of Prophethood, Imamate or Revelation."[4] This is because it is imperishable, and dominates every light.

﴿وَٱللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِۦ وَلَوۡ كَرِهَ ٱلۡكَٰفِرُونَ﴾

"Allah will perfect His light, though the unbelievers may be averse."[5]

1- *Qur'an 81: 1.*
2- *Qur'an 75: 8.*
3- *Qur'an 3: 164.*
4- **Al-Lahuf**, p.194; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.45, p.135.
5- *Qur'an 61: 8.*

Imamate, the continuing reflection of Prophethood and the perfect manifestation of this grace will occur when Imam Mahdi (‘a) appears and lights up the whole universe.

﴿وَنُرِيدُ أَن نَّمُنَّ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ ٱسْتُضْعِفُواْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ ٱلْوَٰرِثِينَ﴾

“And We desired to bestow a favor upon those who were deemed weak in the Land, and to make them the Imams, and to make them the heirs.”[1]

5- The time of the Imam’s (‘a) appearance

Only God knows, and those whom God has let know, the time of the Imam’s (‘a) appearance. In some narrations by the Infallibles (‘a) his appearance coincides with the Day of Judgment, thus confirming its being unknown.

﴿ثَقُلَتْ فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ لَا تَأْتِيكُمْ إِلَّا بَغْتَةً﴾

“It will be momentous in the heavens and the earth; it will not come on you but of a sudden.”[2]

The time of the rising of Imam al-Mahdi (s) is God’s secret, and estimating the time is not only baseless, but also forbidden by the Innocent (‘a). Imam Sadiq (‘a) has said: “It is narrated from Abdul Rahman Ibn Kathir, who said: ‘I was with Abi Abdullah (‘a) when Mehzam arrived at his place, saying: ‘I am your devotee: Tell me about the time of rising.’ He answered, ‘O Mehzam, *Waqqatoon* tell lies and those who make haste are destroyed and the Muslims remain salivated.”[3]

1- *Qur’an 28: 5.*
2- *Qur’an 7: 187*; **Kefayat al-Athar**, p.167; **Bihar al-Anwar,** p.36, p.341.
3- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.368.

Abi Basir narrates from Abi Abdullah (‘a), who said: ‘I asked him about the *Qa’im*,’ he answered, ‘*Al-waqqatun* tell lies, and we, the members of the Household (‘a) would not set a date for his rising.”[1]

The lack of setting a date for Imam al-Mahdi’s (‘a) rise and the emphasis placed on its being secret does not, in any sense, mean that the Imam (‘a) is unaware of the time of his rise. The Perfect Man, who with God’s permission, knows everything about the universe, knows well the unknown knowledge, and his time of rise, too, is not an exception; but it is expedient for human society to keep the time a secret. Imam Sadiq (‘a) did not say to Abi Basir that he did not know the time of the Imam’s rising; rather, he said “We would not set a time for the Imam’s (‘a) rising.”

Definitely, the day of the Imam’s (‘a) rise would be one of the best examples of “God’s days”, and it is among the duties of Muslims to wait for that day impatiently.

The General perspectives of the era of appearance

Before the appearance of the Last Imam (‘a), the world will be as it was when the Last Prophet (s) appeared. There will be different nations with differing religions; the Divine Principles will be forgotten; the human principles will be non-existent; the international agreements will remain forgotten and the law governing men would be that of Pharaoh.[2]

On the other hand, due to different interpretations of religion, the sacred Books, Divine knowledge and human society would encounter a much more difficult problem than at the time of the rise of the Prophet of Islam (s). The most significant issue at that time was worshipping wooden and stone idols, the inappropriate nature of which is not difficult to grasp. But it is extremely hard to grasp the falsehood of many religious interpretations, which in many cases has led to ambiguities and chaos.

At such a chaotic time when humanity is dominated by whims, and wisdom is governed by illusions, and the Divine Books are interpreted by wrong assumptions, ethics in human communities start

1- **Al-Kafi,** vol.1, p.368.
2- *Qur’an 20: 64.*

deteriorating and human pledges are not held valid any more. Under such circumstances, the children of Adam (‘a) will yearn for the rise of the Imam (‘a), who will destroy injustice and set the wisdom of man free, and unite humanity

﴿وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَٱلْأَغْلَٰلَ ٱلَّتِى كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

“And remove from them their burden and the shackles which were upon them.”[1]

The location of his rise

The Household (‘a) narrations state that the Mahdi (‘a) will rise from Mecca besides the Ka’ba. This will take place while he is praying to God and Gabriel calls people to swear allegiance to God, and the Imam (‘a), too, proclaims, “I am what remains with Allah.” In this way, he will let the world know of his reappearance. Imam Baqir (‘a) states: “When he appears, he will rise from the Ka’ba, reciting

﴿بَقِيَّتُ ٱللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ﴾

“What remains with Allah is better for you, if you are believers.”[2]

Then he will introduce himself, saying, “I am what remains with Allah on the earth.”[3]

Some narrations of the Innocent (‘a) have specified the Black Stone as the starting point of the rise of Imam Mahdi (‘a), which is not in contradiction with previous statements. Imam Sadiq (‘a) has stated “From this location rises what remains with Allah.”[4]

Imam Sadiq (‘a) is narrated to have said that “The Hatim (the horseshoe - shaped enclosure) will be the location of the descent of Gabriel in the presence of the Imam (‘a) at the time of rising, and adds that Gabriel will be the first one who swears allegiance to Imam

1- *Qur’an 7: 157.*
2- *Qur’an 11: 86.*
3- **Kamal al-Din,**.
4- **Al-Kafi,** vol.4, p.185.

al-Mahdi (‘a).”[1] Mecca is not only the location of the Imam’s (‘a) rise, but also the starting point of his rise. “After his appearance, he will appoint a governor for Mecca and then carry on his universal mission.”[2] The reason for the Imam’s (‘a) rising from Mecca probably lies in the fact that Mecca is the pivotal location for the perseverance of man in obeying Divine commands when destruction of the unjust and aggression take over. The base for this popular rise against tyranny is the firmly standing Ka’ba. This is confirmed by Imam Sadiq (‘a): “As long as Ka’ba stands the religion, too, stands.”[3]

Thus, religion depends on the survival of the Ka’ba. And if the Ka’ba is broken down then religion will die and people will die with the death of religion. The basis for all these statements is the following sacred verse of the Qur’an: “Allah has made the Ka’ba, the sacred house, a sanctuary for the people.” (Qur’an 5:97)

It is worth mentioning that Imam Mahdi (‘a) will enjoy God’s special assistance, in the sense that, “God helps him do his job over night;”[4] and “every obstacle is removed from his way and his troops, which include 313, gathered around him from every corner of the world.”[5] Imam Sadiq (‘a) has stated, “The earth will become so smooth as though the globe is in his sacred hands, and he becomes aware of any event that occurs on the earth.”[6]

Some events which would co-occur with his rise

1- The Descent of Jesus Christ (‘a)

When Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) rises, the descent of Jesus Christ (‘a) and his praying behind Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) will be the most important event. Allamh Tabataba’i (may God bless his soul) states in this regard: “There are narrations, narrated from the Prophet (s) and the House-hold (‘a) by both Sunni and Shiite scholars, concerning the descent of

1- **Al-Irshad,** vol.2, pp.382-383.
2- **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.52, p.308.
3- **Al-Kafi,** vol.4, p.271.
4- **Kamal al-Din,** vol.1, pp.433-434.
5- **Muntakhab al-Anwar**, p.176; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.51, p.157.
6- **Kamal al-Din,** vol.2, p.392.

Jesus Christ (‘a).”[1] Jabir Ibn Abdullah Ansari narrates: “Jesus Christ arrives. Then Imam al-Mahdi (s) says: “Come here and pray to God, we wish to stand behind you.” But Jesus Christ replies: “God has given some of you among this ummah a more prominent position.”[2] The Prophet of Islam (‘a) has also said, “How would it be when Jesus Christ descends among you and you stand in front and pray?”[3]

Not only would Jesus Christ stand behind Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) when praying, most people of the Book will stand behind Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) while praying to God. In this regard, the Reverend Allamah Tabataba’i, in the margin to the following Qur’anic verse,

﴿وَإِن مِّنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ إِلَّا لَيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِۦ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهِۦ﴾

“*And there is not one follower of the Book but most certainly believes in this before his death.*”[4]

Writes the following comment:

Hajjaj told Shahr Ibn Hushab: “There is one verse in the Book of God which has made me tired.” Shahr asked: “O Lord, which verse is it?” He replied, “There is no believer who does not turn to Jesus before his death.”[5]

There is not one of the followers of the book who would not believe in Jesus Christ before he died and Jesus Christ (‘a) would be their witness on the Day of Judgment. I swear to God that I ordered my men to behead the Jews and the Christians.” Shahr said: “May you be safe and sound, my Lord. You have interpreted the verse wrongly.”

Hajjaj asked: “How is it then?” Shahr replied: “Prior to the Day of Judgment, Jesus Christ (s) will descend to the earth and everybody on the earth will accept his religion, but Jesus Christ will stand behind Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) to pray to God. Hajjaj, showing his surprise, asked Shahr: “How did you know all this?”

1- **Al-Mizan,** vol.5, p.146.
2- **Kashf al-Ghumma**, vol.2, p.474: **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.51, p.85 and p.93; **Sahih Muslim,** vol.1, p.95.
3- **Ta’wil al-Ayat**, p.551; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.14, p.344.
4- *Qur’an 4: 159.*
5- *Qur’an 4: 159.*

He replied: "Imam Baqir ('a) has told me this." Hajjaj then replied: "I swear to God you have had this information from the valid source."[1]

2- The presence of the Kahf Group

The Kahf Group will also rise and stand next to Imam al-Mahdi ('a). This is found in many narrations.[2]

3- The annihilation of Sufyanid Troops

Another event is the complete annihilation of Sufyanid troops in war with Imam al-Mahdi ('a).

1- **Tafsir al-Qummi,** vol.1, p.158.
2- **Al-Tara'if,** vol.1, p.83 and p.176; **Al-Umdah**, p.373; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.36, p.367; and vol.391, p.150.

CHAPTER TWO
THE BLESSED GOVERNMENT OF MAHDI (‘A)

From appearance to victory

﴿فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ ٱللَّهِ هُمُ ٱلْغَٰلِبُونَ﴾

“Surely the party of Allah is that they shall be triumphant.”[1]

This victory will take place by Imam al-Mahdi (s) firmly erecting the honorable flag of monotheism. However, arriving at such a victory would not be an easy task because the obstinate enemies, with Pharaoh’s Logic, will oppose the man determined to terminate the era of exploitation and colonization. It is obvious that sacrifices, and bitter struggles will be needed for this victory to materialize. Those who are faithfully waiting to meet Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) should be prepared and ready, or else, the assumption that Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) on his own will manage the affairs through unnatural ways and approaches, with people doing nothing, is an idle thought. The same thing happened to Bani Israel, who were eager to get rid of Pharaoh’s tyranny without giving any sacrifices. They were the lazy and idle people who told Moses (‘a):

﴿فَٱذْهَبْ أَنتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَٰتِلَآ إِنَّا هَٰهُنَا قَٰعِدُونَ﴾

“Go, therefore, you and your Lord, then fight you both, surely we will sit here down.”[2]

Those who are waiting for Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) but are thinking in this way are doing nothing to prepare themselves. They are in love with the hidden Imam and not the *Qa’im* Imam. This idle group of people will be the ones who will not be obedient to the Imam (‘a) but disobey him. However, there are some brave men, who are eagerly ready to sacrifice their lives for this issue, having the Qur’an in one hand and their weapon in the other. They are prepared to help the

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1- *Qur’an 5: 56.*
2- *Qur’an 5: 24.*

Imam (‘a) in this Holy war, and endanger both their lives and their possessions.

These are the genuine followers of the *Qa’im* Imam (‘a) who are impatient to assist him. The presence of the youth among the troops of the Imam (‘a) is outstanding, reducing the number of the elderly in the troops. Imam Ali (‘a) said: “Among the troops of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) there are many young men and the number of the elderly among the troops looks like the amount of collyrium and salt in one’s daily provision.”[1]

﴿يَهۡدُونَ بِأَمۡرِنَا﴾

“…guiding by Our command.”[2]

And get reformed through him and spare no time elevating and glorifying Allah will help. Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) will use eloquence in ordinary times but swords at war-time, and raise the banner of monotheism across human society.

On the appearance of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) the Blessings of God will increase. God’s promise

﴿وَلَوۡ أَنَّ أَهۡلَ ٱلۡقُرَىٰٓ ءَامَنُواْ وَٱتَّقَوۡاْ لَفَتَحۡنَا عَلَيۡهِم بَرَكَٰتٖ مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ﴾

“And if the people of the towns had believed and guarded against evil, We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth,”[3]

will materialize in such a way, that a passenger travelling between Iraq and Damascus would place his feet only on green grass all along his way.[4]

1- **Al-Ghaibah,** Nu’mani, p.315; **Al-Ghaibah**, Tusi, p.476.
2- *Qur’an 21: 73.*
3- *Qur’an 7: 96.*
4- **Al-Khisal,** p.626.

Upon his rising, Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) will reveal the apparent and hidden treasures of Imamate and Prophet hood: He will have the shirt of Joseph (‘a), the ring of Solomon (‘a), the rod of Moses (‘a) and the gown of the Last Messenger of Allah (s). He would embody the awe of Moses (‘a), the patience of Job (‘a), the wisdom of David (‘a), the beauty of Jesus Christ (‘a) and the countenance of Ali (‘a).

The glorious spring of hearts

The holy Qur’an speaks of the earth and its changes in the future. One such occasion is the re-birth of the earth after its death: “Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its death.”[1]

Such verses refer to the birth of spring after the seasons of autumn and winter and this re-birth of nature has made social instructors to warn believers

﴿ٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحۡيِ ٱلۡأَرۡضَ بَعۡدَ مَوۡتِهَا﴾

“To regard spring as a reminder of doomsday.” [2]

There are some narrations which combine the re-birth of the earth after its death and the rise of Imam Mahdi (‘a). The rise means to annihilate injustice and tyranny from the earth and thus give it a new birth.

Existence has a hidden meaning besides its apparent manifestation. At one level, it is the apparent nature; at another level, it is the spiritual nature, which is the very essence of man’s life. This is because the life and death of the earth is a natural phenomenon; but the death and life of man’s life is a spiritual fact. It should be known that words are created to convey meanings. For this reason, the concepts of death, life and the earth can have many meanings.

If the word “earth” is interpreted in the above verse as “the ground,” it definitely connotes the appearance of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a); it would need no further explanation. However, if by the word “earth” here, is meant the usual meaning of the word, then it would need to find a

1- **Haqqi Tafsir**, vol.9, p.229; and vol.10, p.373.
2- *Qur’an 57: 17.*

relation between the re-birth of the earth and the appearance of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a). No doubt, there are two kinds of life and death for man: the apparent – natural death, and the hidden-real one. Man’s superficial life and death, from his entrance into the world and his existence in the world is studied in biology. However, man’s real life and death depends on his mental-religious growth.

No doubt, the earth, too, is subject to a natural life and death. Now we should find out if the earth possesses a hidden-real life and death beside its apparent- superficial life and death. Since there are two aspects for man’s life and death, we can naturally assume that the earth, too, has two aspects to its life and death. We can think of another kind of life and death for the earth beside the Big Bang and its destruction.

The Holy Qur’an as we have already seen, considers all creatures praising Almighty Allah continuously.

﴿وَإِن مِّن شَيۡءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمۡدِهِۦ﴾

“There is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise.”[1]

Since the praisegiver should recognize the object of its praise, in this case, God and His praise in accordance with its degree of understanding. Therefore, it can be concluded that the earth, the universe, and man, possess some stages of thought and comprehension. Besides praising, the Holy Qur’an says,

﴿وَلَهُۥٓ أَسۡلَمَ مَن فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ طَوۡعٗا وَكَرۡهٗا﴾

“And to him submits whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly.[2]

﴿فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلۡأَرۡضِ ٱئۡتِيَا طَوۡعًا أَوۡ كَرۡهٗا قَالَتَآ أَتَيۡنَا طَآئِعِينَ﴾

“So, He said to it and to the earth: ‘Come both, willingly or unwillingly’. They both said: ‘We come willingly.’”[3]

1- *Qur’an 17:44.*
2- *Qur’an 3:44.*
3- *Qur’an 41: 11.*

﴿وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَا فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ مِن دَآبَّةٍ وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ﴾

"*And whatever creature that is in the heavens and in the earth makes obeisance to Allah only, and the angels too, and they do not show pride.*"[1]

All these verses indicate that the agents for all of these cases should enjoy some sort of understanding. There are numerous pieces of evidence among narrations, which confirm the above: instances of the complaints of the earth and the advice given by it to man, all indicating that the earth has conceptual power.

Imam Sadiq ('a) points out: "The tomb warns us that it is a strange land. It is the nest of terror, the den of insects, worms and reptiles, a portion of paradise, a pit of hell." Since the whole earth has the capacity of becoming a big tomb, therefore, the above statements can be generalized for the whole earth.

Is it fair to think of all these cases as mere examples when we observe so much emphasis given by the Qur'an and Sunnah to the perception possessed by the earth?

Thinking of these clear cases as examples is similar to a short man putting on a long gown and taking a pair of scissors to cut it short instead of putting on his size of gown. Those who are unable to arrive at the right interpretation for these verses and narrations, present some explanations which are similar to the cases of those who put on too long gowns but try to shorten them. Such people should try to elevate their understanding levels, not lower the Qur'anic knowledge:
1- Analyze yourself, not the news
2- Denounce your mind, not the pasture.[2]

The great Gnostic and renowned scholar Shaykh Baha'i, upon his last days on the earth, while passing through the grave-yard, heard this message: "Take care of yourself." Does it indicate that we suffer from hearing defects or does it mean he heard nothing?

1- *Qur'an 16: 49.*
2- **Mathnavi Ma'navi**, first section, p.160, verse 3744.

Note: We can assume that “Limbo” (interval between death and resurrection) means the grave. Thus man has three worlds: This world Limbo, and Resurrection.

But there is evidence that this earth is a conscious being and can talk. Now that it is clear, that the earth, besides having a natural life and death, also has a spiritual life and death. Verses such as:

﴿ٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحۡيِ ٱلۡأَرۡضَ بَعۡدَ مَوۡتِهَا﴾

“Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its death,”[1]

Talk about the life of the earth after its death, so, we can conclude, that one case of the spiritual death of the earth is the era of injustice, ignorance, blasphemy and division of man at the international level. Also, the event of the rise of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) is in fact the spiritual revival and the true spring of the life of the earth. Though his coming the book of tyranny and darkness will be closed for ever and his miraculous breath will awaken the blasphemous world and fill it with justice. This is the spring which the world is waiting for after a troublesome winter of tyranny. The world is waiting for him to take the history of man back from darkness to the light and give it vigor and life and rejuvenation.

How glorious it would be
When the light of Heaven would terminate

The horror and the distress of separation
And start a new life for every one:

If, by my door, that holy bird (the true beloved) come back:
To me, elderly of head, my passed life may come back:

With these (my) tears like rain
I hope that the lightning of fortune,

That departed from my sight, may come back:
The dust of the sole of whose foot

Was the crown of my head.[2]

1- *Qur’an 57: 17.*
2- **Divan of Hafiz**, Lyric No.236.

The Mahdi’s (‘a) Mission

The pivotal features in the mission of the Last Imam (‘a) are the same that were present in the missions of all other God’s men: They were of two categories: The kindling and protecting the fire of Revelation, on the one hand, and guarding the light of human wisdom and insight, on the other. Wisdom and insight in human society act as its eyes. A society lacking light or common sense will end up in the pit of destruction.

Both wisdom and Revelation are so interwoven that one cannot work without the other in guiding the society of men. Neither wisdom can do the job of Revelation, nor revelation do the job of wisdom. This is because wisdom is the internal Revelation and Revelation is the external wisdom: one is apparent, the other is hidden; one is the eye of man’s heart and the other is the light on their way. These two should be taken simultaneously so that the ship of man can be safely navigated towards the shores of safety.

The one who wishes to carry out such a mission should be in possession of a profound background or else he will not be able to endure such a magnanimous mission. Since the caravan of men must arrive at its destination, the guide should be a man of unbelievable capabilities to be able to lead man towards it. Others cannot do such a huge job because they lack the prerequisites. That is why the Holy Qur’an introduces such people to the public:

﴿قُلۡ يَٰٓأَهۡلَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ لَسۡتُمۡ عَلَىٰ شَيۡءٍ حَتَّىٰ تُقِيمُواْ ٱلتَّوۡرَىٰةَ وَٱلۡإِنجِيلَ﴾

“Say: O Followers of the Book! You follow no good till you keep up the Tawrat and the Injeel”[1]

The Holy Qur’an asks such people how they can present the knowledge of Tawrat and Injeel when they lack the necessary pre-conditions. To present such revelation-based knowledge you should possess a monotheistic belief, a profound spirit, and high self esteem, all of which they lack: as a result carrying out such a mission is beyond them.

1- *Qur’an 5: 68.*

For this reason, Imam Sadiq (‘a) considers Imam Mahdi’s (‘a) mission equal to the missions of the Great Prophet of Islam (s) and of other Prophets, who all endeavored to annihilate the tradition of the era of Ignorance and establish Islam.[1]

Note: The appropriate interpretation is to say that wisdom contrasts with narration and not with Revelation; it is because the argumentative wisdom, like the authentic narration, both are mental knowledge and are produced through acquisition; both are fallible, both are changeable; but Revelation is a heart-felt knowledge and reaches man with no physical means; it is infallible and unchangeable.

Both wisdom and narration are under the domination of the Infallible’s Revelation. God’s religion is the straight way and the argumentative wisdom and the authentic narration are both at its service, neither of which has any law of its own. A wisdom-based law means wisdom has discovered it, not that it has made it: it looks like the medical physician’s understanding, who is a discoverer and not a legislator.

The Geometry of the Mahdi (‘a) city

﴿وَعَدَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ مِنكُمۡ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ لَيَسۡتَخۡلِفَنَّهُمۡ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ كَمَا ٱسۡتَخۡلَفَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبۡلِهِمۡ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمۡ دِينَهُمُ ٱلَّذِي ٱرۡتَضَىٰ لَهُمۡ﴾

“Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them rulers in the earth as He made rulers those before them, and that He will most certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them.”[2]

This definite promise of God will materialize when the Glorious Mahdawid state has been established, based on God’s allegiance: it is a state based on monotheism deep inside and characterized by justice. In the interpretations of the Infallibles (‘a) it has been named a state

1- **Al-Ghaiba**, Nu’mani, p.230; see **al-Kafi,** vol.8, pp.36-42; **Bihar al-Anwar,** Vol.52, pp.256-260.
2- *Qur’an 24: 55.*

of righteousness. Imam Mahdi ('a) is the manifestation of the Qur'anic verse

﴿قَآئِمًۢا بِٱلۡقِسۡطِ﴾

"Maintaining His creation with justice."[1]

His government will be based entirely on justice.

God Almighty will bestow a favor upon the deprived of the earth through the rise of Mahdi ('a) and his government in the same way that He favored the believers through the Prophethood of the Great Prophet of Islam (s).

﴿لَقَدۡ مَنَّ ٱللَّهُ عَلَى ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ إِذۡ بَعَثَ فِيهِمۡ رَسُولاً مِّنۡ أَنفُسِهِمۡ﴾

"Certainly Allah conferred a benefit upon the believers when He raised among them an Apostle from among themselves."[2]

God will provide them with the Flag of Imamate which is their Divine heritage.

﴿وَنُرِيدُ أَن نَّمُنَّ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ ٱسۡتُضۡعِفُواْ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ وَنَجۡعَلَهُمۡ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجۡعَلَهُمُ ٱلۡوَٰرِثِينَ﴾

"And We desired to bestow a favor upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the Imams, and to make them the heirs."[3]

The Imam's ('a) top priority would include the elevation of man's wisdom and the creation of the spirit of magnanimity in men.[4] The Imam's starting point would be a struggle against the Pharaoh-based ideology and the oppressive forces of his time. Imam Mahdi's ('a) rise, with the assistance of God, will be very similar to the rise of Moses (s) against the materialistic and oppressive system of Pharaoh.

1- *Qur'an 3: 18.*
2- *Qur'an 3: 164.*
3- *Qur'an 28: 5.*
4- **Kashf al-Ghumma,** vol. 2, p.483; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.51, p.92.

The endeavors and perseverance of Children of Israel’s believers and their limitless sacrifices finally rid them of Pharaoh and they attained a just government. The rise of Imam Mahdi (‘a) will have similar results, because this time, the people will be ready to make lots of sacrifices and persevere on the way of righteousness. Getting full benefit of their leader, they will put an end to the life of the Pharaohs of that future time and establish the government of righteousness, a government which will be glorified due to the bloodshed of God Almighty’s best believers.

There are valuable narrations which depict the characteristics of its citizens; they deal with the justice in society and the hopes in the hearts of its population. The constitution of that government will be based on Revelation and loftiness of the character of its citizens. It will boast of justice and people’s magnanimity. The Great Prophet of Islam (s) depicted Imam al-Mahdi’s (‘a) city in the following way: “He will fill the hearts of Muhammad’s ummah with richness and spreads justice among them.”[1]

The characteristics of Mahdi’s (‘a) Utopia

﴿هُوَ ٱلَّذِیٓ أَرۡسَلَ رَسُولَهُۥ بِٱلۡهُدَىٰ وَدِینِ ٱلۡحَقِّ لِیُظۡهِرَهُۥ عَلَى ٱلدِّینِ كُلِّهِۦ وَلَوۡ كَرِهَ ٱلۡمُشۡرِكُونَ﴾

“He it is Who sent His Apostle with guidance and the religion of truth, that He might cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists may be averse.”[2]

Is God’s irrevocable promise? It means his favorite religion will overcome all other religious, radiating monotheism over man and his world. This will make it possible for all children of Adam to have one single religion, Islam, and nothing else:

﴿ٱلۡیَوۡمَ أَكۡمَلۡتُ لَكُمۡ دِینَكُمۡ وَأَتۡمَمۡتُ عَلَیۡكُمۡ نِعۡمَتِی وَرَضِیتُ لَكُمُ ٱلۡإِسۡلَـٰمَ دِینًا﴾

1- **Kashf al-Ghumma,** vol.2, p.483; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.51, p.92.
2- *Qur’an 9: 33; Qur’an 61: 9.*

"This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor on you, and chosen for you Islam as a religion."[1]

This definite promise will materialize through the rise of Imam Al-Mahdi ('a).

On that day when monotheism will spread all over the world atheism will become a thing of the past, all idols will be destroyed through the fire of righteousness, which will prevail:

انّه لم يجيء تأويل هذه الاية و لو قد قام قائمنا بعده سيرى من يدركه ما يكون من تأويل هذه الآية و ليبلغنَّ دين محمدﷺ ما بلغ اللّيل حتى لا يكون شرك [مشرك] على ظهر الأرض، كما قال الله؛ فلا يبقى في الأرض معبود دون الله (عزّوجلّ) من صنم و وثن و غيره، إلاّ وقعت فيه نارٌ فاحترق.

All persistent enemies will be submitted to the sword of common sense. For this reason, there will be no need for *taqiyyah* (through which the believers of shiism had to keep their identity hidden in the early days of Islam in order to remain safe). Al-Mufaddal says: "When I asked Imam Sadiq ('a) about the content of

﴿أَجۡعَلۡ بَيۡنَكُمۡ وَبَيۡنَهُمۡ رَدۡمًا﴾

"I will make a fortified barrier between you and them."[2]

He replied, 'Attaqiyya.' (keeping one's identity hidden). Then I asked him about,

﴿فَمَا ٱسۡطَٰعُوٓاْ أَن يَظۡهَرُوهُ وَمَا ٱسۡتَطَٰعُواْ لَهُۥ نَقۡبًا﴾

"So they were not able to scale it nor could they make a hole in it."[3]

He answered, "If you keep your identity hidden they cannot enter your privacy, and they cannot use any trick because the keeping of your identity is a strong and fortified barrier between you and your

1- *Qur'an 5: 3.*
2- *Qur'an 18: 95.*
3- *Qur'an 18: 97.*

enemy.’”[1] However, after the appearance of Imam Mahdi (‘a) every evil will be silenced and there will be no need for any hiding of one’s identity *(taqiyyah)* or Fortification.

Imam Sadiq (‘a) sees a coincidence between God’s promise of removing that barrier and the rise of Mahdi (‘a); i.e., the day when God punishes his enemies. al-Mufaddal says when he asked Imam Sadiq (‘a) about the verse:

﴿فَإِذَا جَآءَ وَعۡدُ رَبِّي جَعَلَهُۥ دَكَّآءَ﴾

“When the promise of my Lord comes to pass he will make it level with the ground.”[2]

Imam Sadiq (s) replied: “The hiding of one’s identity will be removed when Imam Mahdi (‘a) rises and in this way he will take revenge from God’s enemies.”[3]

The establishment of a government based on justice by Imam Mahdi (‘a) is not only the end-point of the worship of idols, but it is also puts an end to luxuries and opulence and non-essential splendor. This luxury does not lead to man’s prosperity. This is especially so in those cases where luxury hinders man’s wisdom to deeply understand religion. This is because man’s prosperity depends on his religion. Or else ornamentation or writing Qur’an’s verses with gold at mosques and other holy places would not help us. This kind of ornamentation used at holy places is considered forbidden by jurisprudents, so much so that Imam Sadiq (‘a) considered God’s commands

﴿خُذُواْ مَآ ءَاتَيۡنَٰكُم بِقُوَّةٖ﴾

“Take hold of the law (Torah) We have given you with firmness.”[4]

As taking with the firmness of understanding, a heart full of faith and a body active. It is narrated from Ishaq Ibn Ammar and Yunus, who said, when they asked Aba Abdullah (s) about God’s command “Take

1- **Tafsir al-‘Ayyashi**, vol.2, p.351.
2- *Qur’an 18: 98.*
3- **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.12, p.207.
4- *Qur’an 2:63* and *93; Qur’an 7:171.*

hold of the law We have given you with firmness,” whether it was with body power or spiritual power, he answered: “Both.”[1] For this reason, when Imam Mahdi (‘a) rises, he will cancel all luxuries.

The Manifestations of justice in Mahdi’s (‘a) Utopia

Two basic foundations of Mahdi’s (‘a) Utopia are the establishment of justice and the increase of contentment in man’s soul. The citizens of such a government enjoy perfect safety of life and property. Due to such justice, enmity changes to friendship, quarrels change into peace and hatred changes into affection. Compassion and tenderness develop not only among human beings but among animals, as well. The product of such a government would be social security in such a way that a lady could travel alone the distance between Iraq and Syria without any fear of man or beast.[2]

There will be no sign of injustice in the government of Mahdi (‘a). In the economic and political domains, illegal generosity and liberality will be stopped and every person given what he deserves. When the Mahdi (‘a) rises giving out pieces of land illegally to people will not be allowed.[3]

The Imam’s (‘a) domain of justice will ensure security in every phase of human life. The enactment of laws will be mandatory in dealing with aggression towards people’s life and faith. It will punish those who dominated the Divine Sacred House and were using it for their own mundane benefits; selling their religion for worldly possessions, and cheating people. The Imam (‘a) will reveal such aggressors. “These thieves,” in Imam Sadiq’s (‘a) words, “will be captured by our *Qa’im* (‘a) and their hands will be cut by him. He will take them to public places and proclaim them as the thieves of God.”[4]

Although a relative security exists in any epoch, an absolute security would belong only to those who, based on their common sense and piety, would say yes to Imam Mahdi (‘a) upon his rise and present themselves to him. In his reply to Abu Bakr al-Hathrami,

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1- **Al-Mahasin**, vol.1, p.407.
2- **Al-Khisal,** p.626.
3- **Qurb al-Asnad**, p.39; **Wasa’il al-Shi’ah,** vol.17, p.222.
4- **Al-Kafi,** vol.4, p.243; **Tahthib Al-Ahkam** vol.9, p.213.

Imam Sadiq (‘a) said: “When the *Qa’im* of *Ale-Mohammad* (‘a) rises, every road would be safe and whoever allies with him shall have a safe life.

﴿سِيرُواْ فِيهَا لَيَالِيَ وَأَيَّامًا ءَامِنِينَ﴾

“Travel through the nights and days, will be secure.”[1]

But only

﴿وَمَن دَخَلَهُۥ كَانَ ءَامِنًا﴾

“Whoever enters it shall be secure.”[2]

It is worth mentioning that the general format of Mahdi’s (‘a) justice will be that of the Prophet (s) and Imam Ali (‘a). Imam Mahdi (‘a) is supposed to enliven it and such an achievement will be the result of the endeavors of his students. In a circle where individuals such as Talha, Zubair and Abu Musa Ashari reign, and there happen to be a governor such as Imam Ali (‘a), the results would be nothing more than the events of Jamal, Siffeen, and Nahrawan. But the followers of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) are persons such as Imam Khumayni who obeyed him absolutely. It is clear that such students, who have been educated at the school of the Household (‘a), will be good students for Imam Mahdi (‘a). In this way, the Imam will spread his justice all over the world and act out God’s command over the earth.

There might exist among his scholars some un-clean individuals who would stand against him for their own benefits. But the clean scholars would not let these corrupt ones gain power in any way.

The maturity of theoretical and practical wisdom in the Mahdawid government

Man’s prosperity takes place under the light of theoretical and practical wisdom. Unless these two factors are taken care of, man can not succeed. The product of humanity is justice. The ultimate goal of the descent of Books and Messengers was to provide man with

1- *Qur’an 34: 18.*
2- *Qur’an 3: 97.*

prosperity at different stages of his life. This shows that the ultimate objective of God’s religions is that

﴿لِّيَهۡلِكَ مَنۡ هَلَكَ عَنۢ بَيِّنَةٖ وَيَحۡيَىٰ مَنۡ حَيَّ عَنۢ بَيِّنَةٖ﴾

“He who perishes might perish by clear proof, and he who lives might live by clear proof.”[1]

The intermediary objective of religion is to create a civilized society in which man’s prosperity is provided for; the fruits of this prosperity are knowledge and wide-spread justice. It is worth mentioning that the aggressors stand against religion because their benefits are threatened by the prosperity that religion provides people. These are people who in the words of the Qur’an

﴿يُرِيدُونَ أَن يُطۡفِـُٔواْ نُورَ ٱللَّهِ بِأَفۡوَٰهِهِمۡ﴾

“They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths.”[2]

The fruition of man’s prosperity, which comes about with the cutting of the tree of ignorance, is God’s Promise which would manifest itself in the knowledge–based and ignorance–defying government of Mahdi (‘a), and monotheistic religion would dominate every phase of human life, and man with the assistance of Imam Mahdi (‘a), would benefit from his government.

With the rise of Mahdi (‘a) man’s lust-attaining wisdom will be set free. Then those hearts revolutionized by the Imam (‘a) will be ready for the life-giving thoughts of the Imam (‘a). In this way, Imam Mahdi’s (‘a) Utopian republic will emerge.

The Ummah in the light of a unified religion and under the leadership of God’s Last Imam (‘a) will build the utopia, develop and capture the highest point in knowledge and culture. In the words of Abu Abdullah (‘a), “They will attain the twenty seven sections of knowledge, despite the fact that during the pre-rise of the Imam (‘a), man with all his endeavors will have captured only two sections of

1- *Qur’an 8: 42.*
2- *Qur’an 9: 32; Qur’an 61: 8.*

these sections.”[1] Ali Ibn Al Husayn (‘a) says: “Such weaknesses and defects will not exist anymore among Shiites, and their hearts will harden like steel in such a way that one person’s strength would equal that of forty men.”[2] Regarding this issue Abi Ja’far (‘a) says: “When the *Qa’im* (‘a) rises, fear will depart from our Shiites and their hearts will become like steel, and every man will have the power of forty men; they will become governors of the earth and its forerunners.”

Management and Judgment in Mahdi’s Utopia

Insecurity, violation and aggression are all products of injustice. In a society in which the rights of the oppressed are denied and the men of wealth and power are free to do what they wish, social security loses its merit. In the government of Mahdi (‘a) “Those justice – seekers who have allied with Mahdi (‘a) will treat others justly and respect the Mahdi’s (‘a) justice and security”[3]

During the era of Mahdi’s government, no citizen of Imam Mahdi’s (‘a) Utopia will be deprived of justice. Imam al-Mahdi (s) will allocate the common wealth and administrative possibilities on the basis of the Divine system of merit; no instances of favoritism will be seen. “Such a government will treat the bad and good alike from the justice point of view.”[4] The laws of Islam, such as the Laws of inheritance, will be implemented:

At the time of the Imam’s (‘a) rise God will set inheritance on the base of brother hood 2000 years prior to the creation of their souls. So when the Imam (‘a) rises inheritance would be on the basis of brother hood and religion and not on the basis of physical brother hood.[5]

Some Islamic Laws, which for different reasons in the past, have not been enacted, finally get enacted: Abi Abdollah (‘a) says:

1- **Al-Khara‘j wa al-Jra’ ih**, vol.2, p.841.
2- **Al-Khisal,** vol.2, p.541.
3- **‘Ilal al-Sharayi‘**, vol.1, p.113.
4- Ibid, p.192.
5- **Man La Yahduruh al-Faqih,** vol.4, p. 352.

عن أبي عبدالله عليه السلام: دمان في الإسلام حلال من الله لا يقضي فيهماأحد؛ حتّى يبعث الله قائمنا أهل البيت. فاذا بعث الله (عزّوجلّ) قائمنا أهل البيت حكم فيهما بحكـــم الله لايريد عليهما بيّنة الزاني المحصن يرجمه و مانع الزكاة يضرب عنقه.

The new issue for Imam Mahdi ('a) might be a collection of real duties, as opposed to apparent ones, and the enactment of un-applied Islamic laws. Abu Ja'far ('a) states: "Since the Imam ('a) starts acting out those forgotten Islamic laws, people might think he has brought forth a new faith."[1]

The foundation for this claim rests in Imam Sadiq's ('a) answer to the question of Abdullah Ibn Ata regarding the traits of Imam al-Mahdi ('a). He replied "Acting in the way of the Messenger of God (s) and destroying the behavior of the epoch of Ignorance."[2]

Imam Mahdi ('a) will have a special way of enacting justice for the oppressed. In contrast to his ancestors who based their judicial judgments on witnesses and swearing, he will issue verdicts based on facts. Abi Abdullah (s) says:

عن أبي عبدالله عليه السلام: لاتذهب الدنيا ختى يخرج رجل مني يحكم بحكومة آل داود و لايسأل بيّنة، يعطي كل نفس حقها.

When Imam Mahdi ('a) establishes a government of righteousness, in the words of Abi Abdullah ('a), "He will never ally with any governor and have no obligations vis-à-vis any aggressor."[3] He will never compromise: he will force them to obey. Then, standing firm against the vicious enemies, whose aim is to create injustice and exploitation, "he will draw his sword for revenge, and satisfy the hearts of the oppressed."[4]

1- **Al-Ghaibah,** Nu'mani, p.320.
2- Ibid p.230.
3- Ibid, p.342.
4- **Kifayat al-Athar**, p.169; **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.36, p.303.

Progress of industry and technology during the Imam’s era

Contrary to the false assumption of some, who consider Mahdi’s (‘a) government as a reactionary movement which will take people back to man’s past, nomadic life style, the Imam’s government will be an era of progress in technology, industry and permanent development. Cultivation and flourishing of cities will be speedy. Mosques, as a manifestation of this development, will be built in large numbers. In architecture, in the words of Abi Abdollah (‘a), “Outside the city of Kufah a mosque will be built with a thousand doors and the houses in this city will continue up to River Euphrates, flowing past Karbala. Cities will develop to such a degree that a man, riding a fast-going camel, will head for the Friday congregation, but due to the long distances in the city he would never reach there in time.”[1]

Note 1: A pious man, as God’s caliph, will develop the earth:

﴿هُوَ أَنشَأَكُم مِّنَ ٱلْأَرْضِ وَٱسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا﴾

“He brought you into being from the earth and made you dwell in it.”[2]

Note 2: The spread of justice, the just allocation of jobs, the provision of services in just ways, would delete the assumption that only Kufah will progress.

Note 3: The multilateral relations with the justice-based central government would bring about constant development and create socio-political bonds with it. The result will be more progress.

In the area of industry and technology, a fascinating development will take place. In the words of Abi Abdullah (‘a): “There will be no harbinger between the Imam (‘a) and his followers; he will talk and they will hear him wherever they are.”[3]

This narration definitely describes the progress in technology during the Imam’s (‘a) rise. We are witnessing some extra-ordinary advances in satellites, mass media communication and world

1- **Bihar al-Anwar,** vol.97, p.385.
2- *Qur’an 11: 61.*
3- **Al-Kafi,** vol.8, p.240.

internet, all of which could be the signs of the rise of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a). The perfect forms of these technologies will take place after the Imam’s (‘a) rise.

The unique manifestation of religiousness in Mahdi’s (‘a) government

Although some manifestations of religiousness are seen in today’s world and most of the world’s population believe in one of the Abrahami religions, at the time of the Imam’s (‘a) rise the general inclination will be to adhere to justice and righteousness which is the very essence of Islam. All humanity will gather around the banner of Islam, which will be in the hand of God Almighty’s Last Imam (‘a).

When the government body and the governor, the civic law, the judiciary body are all selected on the basis of justice, people, too, will follow suit. The verse:

﴿لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ﴾

“Certainly We sent Our apostles with clear arguments, and sent down with them the Book and the balance, that men may conduct themselves with equity.”[1]

Would be acted out in the best possible way. Society, under the leadership of the one who is the manifestation of establishing equity would do the same.

Among the specific characteristics of the Imam’s (‘a) government is the acting out of the Islamic commands and orders and the citizens, following their Imam (‘a) closely, will have a profound role to play. And since the verse:

﴿الَّذِينَ إِن مَّكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنكَرِ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ﴾

1- *Qur’an 57: 25.*

"Those who, should We establish them in the land, will keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and enjoin good and forbid evil; and Allah is the end of affairs."[1]

Will manifest itself during that era. Prayer, the pillar of religion, will be kept up, the poor-rate will be paid and the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil will be acted out. The keeping up of prayers will create a strong bond between man and his God. There will be bonds between different sections of the rich and the poor because of the payment of the poor-rate. The issues of good and bad will be emphasized through the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil. Thus, evil will disappear from the Islamic society.

On the other hand, the fate of the enemies of religion and destroyers of the centers for Islamic cultures will be nothing more than misery:

﴿وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن مَّنَعَ مَسَـٰجِدَ ٱللَّهِ أَن يُذْكَرَ فِيهَا ٱسْمُهُۥ وَسَعَىٰ فِى خَرَابِهَآ ۚ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَن يَدْخُلُوهَآ إِلَّا خَآئِفِينَ ۚ لَهُمْ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا خِزْىٌ وَلَهُمْ فِى ٱلْـَٔاخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾

"And who is more unjust than he who prevents men from the masjids of Allah that His name should be remembered in them, and strives to ruin them? As for these, it was not proper for them that they should have entered except in fear. They shall meet with disgrace in this world, and they shall have a great chastisement in the hereafter."[2]

Social justice, just distribution of job opportunities and general contentment of citizens are among the great manifestations of religiousness during the Mahdi ('a) era. At that time, the rich shall pay their alms and the roots of greed will be erased from the hearts of the needy, so much so, that alms will be collected in the treasury, but there will be no receiver for it.

1- *Qur'an 22: 41.*
2- *Qur'an 2: 114.*

Up to the Day of Judgment

Despite the unique characteristics of the government of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a), and the right religion and justice becoming wide-spread, human society at that time, too, will witness disagreements. In that era, blasphemy and division would fill the hearts of some who do not accept Islam. They will hate the Imam (‘a) and finally, he will be assassinated and martyred by those wrong-doers.

Imam al-Mahdi’s (‘a) universal mission will be the same as the one of the Great Prophet of Islam (s). He gave this position to his followers, and their message was the same as the Messenger’s (s). In carrying out this message, those beloved Imams (‘a) lost their lives: the climax of this sacrifice was Husayn (‘a) in Karbala. The message of Ashura, which was negating any non-God or unjust government, will be presented to humanity by the Last Imam (‘a) and this will lead human society towards prosperity. But when those who have lost the very capability for guidance will martyr the Last Imam (‘a), the Day of Judgment will arrive and the whole universe will be broken down.

The relation between the martyrdom of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) and the start of doomsday is found in a narration of Imam Sadiq (‘a). He heard it from his ancestors: “Religion and the Imam complement each other: neither one is complete without the other. Islam is the foundation of the universe, and the Imam is its supporter. Thus, if Islam does not exist, no foundation will exist. And if Islam exists without an Imam, it will not last long. For this reason, when Imam al-Mahdi (s) will be martyred, there will be no sign of Islam; and since Islam will not exist, the whole universe will be destroyed and Doomsday will start.[1]

1- **Muntakhab al-Athar**, p.338; **Mu‘jam Ahadith al-Imam al-Mahdi**, vol.3, p.193, Hadith No.675.

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